TRAGEDY OF HYDERABAD

By

MIR LAIK ALI

Publishers

PAKISTAN CO-OPERATIVE BOOK SOCIETY LTD.

KARACHI

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'CHARMINAR'
A Symbol of One Time Free Hyderabad.

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
THOSE TENS OF THOUSANDS DEAD
AND MANY MORE STILL SILENTLY SUFFERING
FOR THEIR STRUGGLE IN
"THE CAUSE OF HYDERABAD"

PREFACE

The contents of this book were mostly scribbled during the days of my internment after the fall of Hyderabad and were among the few belongings with which I luckily escaped from the clutches of the Indian armies in occupation of the State. After my arrival in Pakistan the manuscript received some finishing touches and additions. The book was then in hot demand by the publishers abroad; but for some reasons, which I need not disclose here, I was advised to delay the publication. Some three years later I passed it over again to some publishers in the U.S.A. and later in the U.K. In both places material cuts and changes, although from different angles, were suggested to which I could not possibly agree; because, that would have taken away from the book some important records of the events. I felt I would rather not publish the book than allow it to be subjected to such amputations.

Despite all the delays, the unexpurgated publication of this book now is really indebted to the gentle persuasion and active interest of Mr. N. M. Khan. His silent and solid efforts towards the encouragement of learning in Pakistan command the respect of many including myself.

Mir Laik Ali.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the first World War the British admitted that they could no longer police the world. At the end of the second World War they realised that they could not for long hold a century old empire or indefinitely rule over their vast colonies. The inevitable was clearly in sight of all: only the process and the timing could be differently viewed.

Soon after winning the World War II, the Conservatives lost the elections and the Labour Party triumphantly, though unexpectedly, stepped into the government benches of the British Parliament. They were briefed on the situation in India by a frustrated ex-soldier, Lord Wavell. A civilian mind may yet have taken other factors more seriously into consideration; but to an army General nothing could be more calamitous than to apprehend that the units under him may not respond to his command. Even the distant possibility of Indian armed forces going out of control seems to have out-weighed every thing else with him and prompted precipitate action on his part. In February 1947, to the surprise of all, Prime Minister Attlee declared that the British rule over India would cease by June 1948. Plans were drawn up to progressively withdraw British troops and administrative personnel by stages from the hinterland possibly to the ports and then to send them home. After his experiences of withdrawals in the battle fields of Africa and elsewhere, Wavell was more concerned for the moment over the safety of the British personnel and property. India and its stupendous problems took only a second place.

A British Cabinet Mission had been sent to India earlier, in March 1946, to determine the ways and means of transfer of power to Indian hands. The trouble in India was that the majority Hindu community with All-India Congress as its chief political organisation regarded itself as the only rightful successor to the relinquishing British. Even a hundred million Muslims were considered by the Hindus as a mere minority to be engulfed and absorbed progressively into the Hindu cult. The other minorities, notably among them the politically blind Sikhs, were all in a state of confusion. The situation was further complicated by the existence, in a third of the sub-continent, of

self-governing states of varying degrees of development and sizes—some as large as France and others as small as Monaco—some more progressive and better organised than many parts of British ruled India and others completely mediaeval, were all left in a fluid and vaguely defined state.

The Muslims, despite being almost a hundred million in number, might have fallen prey to the skilful machinations of the Congress and other Hindu political organisations under the indifferent and, at times, unsympathetic British rule, had they not been kept united and politically conscious by the inspired genius of one man, namely Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He rose to every occasion. His demand for a separate independent state for a hundred million Muslims to be called Pakistan was at first ridiculed, then regarded as a political stunt and later considered as a force which could not be overlooked and had to be accommodated in some form. The aim of the British was to maintain and leave behind India as one political unit. So, the Cabinet Mission evolved a formula for a loose federation at the centre controlling only the defence, communications and foreign affairs and for complete autonomy otherwise to the three regions in which the sub-continent was to be divided namely: 'A' Predominantly Hindu, 'B' Predominantly Muslim, and 'C' Where the Muslims were in a small majority.

The Congress accepted the plan as they thought that any resistance to the proposals would only prolong the British rule and they were in great haste to acquire, what power they could, immediately. The Muslims accepted the plan as they thought it provided the nearest practical approach to their demand for an independent Pakistan. The other minorities remained confounded and the Indian states remained neglected. In all probability the plan would have been implemented had the more responsible leaders of the Congress succeeded in keeping their real intentions and objectives properly veiled. However, already intoxicated at the prospect of their ascension to power, they blurted out the eventual futility of the Cabinet Mission plan and even indicated how, once in power, they would set it aside. As a result of these disclosures, Jinnah and the Muslim League withdrew their support of the plan and resolved and stood firm that India would have to be

partitioned and a completely independent state of Pakistan would have to be carved out.

Wavell, a sincere and honest soldier, still showed himself more concerned over the arrangements for the withdrawal of the British and could neither deal effectively with the Hindu nor with the Muslim leaders. He was also distressed by the communal riots which were spreading like wild fire in many parts of the sub-continent and was planning military and strategic moves to deal with the disturbances. Amidst this turmoil, he was recalled in the beginning of 1947 and replaced by Lord Mountbatten with the definite assignment to transfer power before the middle of 1948. Mountbatten arrived with his armoury full of all kinds of weapons: a clear mandate from his Government and the blessings of the Opposition, his relationship with the King (an important factor in influencing the ruling princes), efficient staff, dramatic gestures, energy, solid threats and empty bluffs, half-truths and bland lies, dignity and lack of dignity to be employed in association with certain members of his family when and where and how any or all of these could serve his purpose.

A school of thought led by Gandhiji was definitely against partition. But with power in sight many of his staunch disciples were no longer much interested in his fastings or in his preachings. Probably none was prepared to go again behind the bars, if needed. After tasting power as head of an Interim Government of India, Nehru was certainly not prepared to give it up. He was hoping that his domain would extend over the entire sub-continent. He was not prepared to risk his power or the displeasure of the Mountbatten family even at the cost of partitioning of the country. Patel believed that if some settlement was not arrived at with Jinnah and the Muslim League it would give the British a pretext to stay on. Either Jinnah had to be pacified or his position had to be undermined. He, therefore, advocated that if partition was to be effected on a communal basis, the provinces of the Punjab and Bengal should be first divided according to majority Muslim or majority Hindu areas. This appeared like cutting off the limbs of Pakistan from both sides and had little chance of proving acceptable to Jinnah. If Jinnah insisted on the whole of these two provinces then his fundamental theory to divide the country on com-

munal basis would explode. Moreover, every Hindu leader believed that if partition did come about on the basis of division of the Punjab and Bengal, Pakistan would never be a viable state economically, politically or strategically and, not before long, it would be compelled by events to re-unite with Hindu India.

Early in June 1947 the British Government, through the Viceroy presented a new formula to the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders. It was to divide India into predominantly Muslim and predominantly Hindu sections by division of the Punjab and of Bengal. Each block so formed was to be an independent Dominion under the British Crown. The bait offered was that in the event of the acceptance of the formula by all concerned, the transfer of power to the two Dominions would be made almost immediately and even 15th of August was the date proposed. The lure of immediate power was too great for Nehru, Patel and the other Congress leaders to resist. To Jinnah and the Muslim League a truncated but completely sovereign state of Pakistan was preferable to any fettered and unwieldy block. The Sikhs were content at what no one knows. The plan and its acceptance was announced over the All India Radio on the 3rd of June 1947 by Mountbatten, Nehru, Jinnah and Baldeo Singh. No mention was made of the Indian States; but it was assumed that as previously proposed they would be free to join either one or the other Dominion or remain free at their will. Only the British Paramountcy was to cease on the 15th August 1947.

The main issue thereafter was how and where the boundary lines between the two Dominions were going to run. There were also the important questions of dividing the assets between the two Dominions and of bifurcating the armed forces. A matter of no less importance was also as to who were going to be the first Governor Generals of India and Pakistan or would Mountbatten be chosen as common Governor General for both at the start.

On the 9th of July the Nizam in his letter to Mountbatten clearly wrote that now that the issue of forming two independent Dominions had been decided, he wished to make the position of Hyderabad very clear. He said Hyderabad would not join either India or Pakistan but shall remain an independent state. He emphatically asked His

Majesty's Government through the Crown Representative Mountbatten to take full account of the position of Hyderabad in dealing with the future of the sub-continent keeping in view the treaties that had existed between Hyderabad and the British and the prevailing practices. Mountbatten in reply stated that he had forwarded the Nizam's letter to His Majesty's Government and hoped to have a reply shortly. No such reply could, however, be received; because, as admitted later by Mountbatten himself, the Nizam's letter had never been forwarded to His Majesty's Government!

This was a crucial period. Rioting and mass massacres were spreading all over the sub-continent. Large number of refugees were pouring into the State of Hyderabad from all over as that was about the safest place. All the high sounding assurances given by Mountbatten to quash the disturbances by military force had turned out to be completely worthless. The Sikhs at the time appeared to believe that their only national aim was to butcher as many helpless Muslim men, women and children as they could; besides that they did nothing. Jawahar Lal Nehru was more anxious to intrigue and grab the predominantly Muslim State of Kashmir where he was born and had enlisted secretly the support of Mountbatten to foster his designs. Patel was making full use of the relationship of Mountbatten with the King and of his cunning and crafty methods to force the rulers of the Indian states into accession to India. Jinnah was not prepared to risk the destiny of the newly created state of Pakistan by naming an untrustworthy and unscrupulous person like Mountbatten to be its first Governor General along side with that of India. Mountbatten had felt injured at his not being accepted by Jinnah as the first Governor General of Pakistan. With a vengeance he joined hands with Nehru to devise ways and means to deprive Pakistan of as much territory and as many assets as possible and to make its position difficult. Above all he managed to get the Radcliffe Award, which should have been publicly announced, in his hand well in advance and kept it with him long after the partition, until he was able to secure a direct link for India with Kashmir by getting allotted, through Radcliffe the predominantly Muslim areas of Pathankot and Gurdaspur to India. He managed also to get the important headworks of the main irrigation systems on

which Pakistan life depended placed on the Indian side.

On the 14th of August 1947 Pakistan was formally declared a new independent Dominion with Mohammad Ali Jinnah as its first Governor General. On the following day India was declared a new independent Dominion with Lord Louis Mountbatten as its first Governor General. Hyderabad declared its independence on the same day and despite its size, being land locked, she asked India for a stand-still agreement to allow time to negotiate a fuller agreement over future relationship. After considerable bickering a stand-still agreement was signed between India and Hyderabad towards the end of November 1947. The background and the story of the struggle of Hyderabad to maintain its independence against mean intrigues and aggressive deeds of India which culminated in a massive military attack and forcible occupation of the State by its armed forces, on the 17th of September 1948, in defiance of world opinion, is the subject matter of this book.

CHAPTER I

AFTER THE PARTITION

It was some date early in November of 1947, when I was strolling about the pleasant lounge of the Santa Cruz Airport at Bombay, good half an hour before the departure time of the Deccan Airways Plane to Hyderabad, when I heard something resembling my name announced on the microphone. It repeated "...........Ali, please call at police office desk." Anyway, I approached the desk and asked if it was *me* who was wanted. The police officer indifferently checked up the list and said, "Yes". "Well!", I said, "here I am and what is it about?" I was asked if I was going to Hyderabad. "Yes". I was. Did I have a passport? As it happened I was on my way back from the United States and had my passport on me. After a little pause, I told the police officer that I did have a passport. He did not appear particularly pleased at my producing the document which was full of visas for a good many countries and indicated some diplomatic privileges. He then made a note of the number and date of the passport on a small slip of paper which, even before I had turned my back, he crumpled and threw into the wastepaper basket. I told the police officer that I did not know a passport was needed for Hyderabad. "Ah, yes!", he said, "Hyderabad is a foreign country!". I then had to submit my luggage to the crudest examination I ever experienced before it could be sent on board the plane.

A little later I met in the lounge someone from Hyderabad, I knew. He appeared greatly agitated. I asked him how he was and what the matter was with him. He said he was being harassed by the police who wanted him to produce a passport or a special permit for journey to Hyderabad and as he was in possession of neither he was having a difficult time. Later, he entered into a heated argument with the police officer and was finally allowed to proceed. I then met some Hindu friends who were also on their way to Hyderabad. I asked them, in course of conversation, if they had also been asked to produce passports or permits to go to Hyderabad and, if their luggage

had been searched. No, it was not so with them and one of them added that apparently the new regulations applied only to the Muslims going to Hyderabad! So, it was not the people of Hyderabad that were treated as foreigners—it were only the Muslim residents of that area who were foreigners!

We all boarded the plane and I recited in a low murmur a couple of verses from the Holy Quran (which I always do when I proceed on a journey). We left Santa Cruz runway. "Good", I said to myself. I then chatted for a while with my Hindu friends who all complained that the business had become very dull and the severe restrictions imposed by India on exports and imports from Hyderabad had caused them all a great deal of loss. I had heard something about the restrictions while I was in New York, but I did not know that it was as bad as all that. They all appeared pleased that I was back, and hoped that I would try to do something to help the business community.

Before long I dozed off. I seem to have acquired the habit of sleeping most of the time during train and air travels. When I opened my eyes, we were already over the Hyderabad territory. I could see the river Manjra winding its way over the Bidar plateau and making at one point an almost complete "U". The sight pleased me. I was happy to be back in my own home-land.

From early 1945, I had to make a number of journeys to Europe and America to deal with various financial and technical problems and often as a member of one or the other Government delegation. Thus, I was spending most of my time abroad. On this particular occasion I was returning from Lake Success, after attending the U.N. Session as a delegate for Pakistan. How that had come about I shall discuss in another chapter.

We soon landed at Hakimpet Airport. "Alhamdulillah," (Thanks to Allah) I said to myself. Getting off the plane I could see my wife and children and a few friends at the edge of the runway. I strolled across, and was very warmly greeted in the typically oriental fashion by several of my friends who had come to meet me. It was not a large crowd but quite a few to cheer me up. I met my wife and my sisters who were standing at some distance. While I was still moving among them on the Airport grounds, one of my friends pulled me aside and

whispered into my ears, "Good job you have come back". "Why?" I enquired, "Was I not expected back?" "Yes, of course", he said, and then after a pause added, "but on certain critical occasions we all greatly felt your absence". He even thought things might have been different had I been in Hyderabad on one or two grave occasions. I could not quite grasp what he meant but as there were many others I asked no more questions.

It is a good half an hour's drive from the Airport to our home and on our way my wife told me how poor "Chhatari" who was holding the office of the Prime Minister when I left Hyderabad had felt obliged to relinquish the office and leave the place. Of course I knew he had left Hyderabad, but did not quite know all the events which had led up to his departure. She gave me a brief account of how Chhatari's, Ali Nawaz Jung's and Monckton's houses were surrounded one morning by vast crowds of Ittehadul Muslamin and how the three were prevented from proceeding to Delhi to conclude the "Stand-still Agreement" with India. She also told me that during that period Chhatari was constantly enquiring about me and appeared very anxious to know when I would be back. Before his departure he had left a message for me expressing his regret at not having been able to see me before he left, and hoping that there would soon be some occasion when we would be able to meet.

I began to realize I had returned to Hyderabad this time in a very surcharged atmosphere. Still, I could not fully analyse and co-relate all the issues which were at the root of the subdued excitement and nervousness which seemed to prevail all over.

I soon had long talks with Moin Nawaz Jung who was holding the Law and Order portfolio in the Chhatari Government. He gave me a full account of events and told me that the situation in regard to Indo-Hyderabad relations had become very difficult. He had then been made the Head of the Delegation to negotiate an agreement with the Government of India and had been asked to improve upon the "Draft Stand-still Agreement" between the two Governments to which Chhatari had already given his unofficial assent; but New Delhi appeared to be in no mood to discuss or even consider any changes in this draft. He also told me that matters had become doubly

difficult as while on one hand the Nizam had commanded the Moin Nawaz Jung Delegation to negotiate and improve upon the draft, he had on the other hand sent word to Mountbatten through Sir Sultan Ahmed that he had been obliged against his own wishes to dissolve the Chhatari delegation and to appoint the new delegation on account of the large scale public demonstrations that had been taking place. "Poor Moin Nawaz Jung!" I thought to myself, and asked him why he ever took over the thankless responsibility under the circumstances. He said when the Nizam called him and entrusted him with the job he was reluctant to take it up; but the Nizam insisted and he had no choice. Now, he had to see the end of it in the best manner possible.

A few days later Moin Nawaz Jung went with his co-delegates to Delhi again to continue the talks. I had some of my own affairs to attend to and also visited Delhi about the same time. There, I found the delegates going out and coming back each morning and afternoon disappointed and disgusted with the long and fruitless discussions they were having at the States Ministry. V.P. Menon, the Secretary of the States Ministry at Delhi, had an equally difficult task to perform in dealing with these delegates. He had to carry out the commands of his masters without appearing unreasonable and unaccommodating. There was a lot of quibbling over a word here and a word there and at times V.P., as he was popularly known, would even concede a minor change here and there—but in substance there was little change.

In Delhi I came to know in greater detail, of the woeful fate that the Muslims had met all over what is now called India. I heard of massacres, the occupation of Mosques, the demolition of the tombs of the great Muslim saints and the sense of utter insecurity and abject helplessness on the part of the Muslim minority throughout this new Dominion of the "Commonwealth". I felt dejected as I could not visit the tombs of some Muslim saints that I had regularly done whenever I visited Delhi. I was told that there was no trace left of many of them and that the places were full of armed Sikhs and other non-Muslim refugees. No Muslim dared go anywhere near these places any longer. I was feeling very sore at heart. Early the following morning, I thought of going out for a walk along the famous Kingsway

of New Delhi, left behind along with other land marks of the British rule in India. The very idea of my going out for a walk was ridiculed. I was told I would at least need an armed platoon around me while walking if I had any intention of returning back safe. I had to drop the idea of going out and had to content myself with a stroll in the garden of the Guest House attached to the famous Nizam's Palace at New Delhi.

I had gone to Delhi to attend to some of my business affairs—mostly connected with the release of a large volume of essential goods that were badly needed by the various industries with which I was connected and which were held up at the Indian ports for no obvious reason. But the atmosphere all over was so surcharged and the entire administrative machinery at New Delhi appeared not only in utter confusion but so hostile to anything connected with Hyderabad, that I had to abandon all attempts in that direction. Zahid Hussain, the High Commissioner for Pakistan in India came to us for a luncheon, and I told him that I wanted an early opportunity of a meeting with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. I had learnt that Jinnah himself was anxious to see me soon and to receive a first-hand account of the proceedings at U.N. and of the activities of the Pakistan delegation. Zahid Hussain told me that he would first telephone to Lahore—where Jinnah was staying at the time—and fix up an appointment and then make the best arrangement he could for my journey to Lahore and back. The appointment was soon arranged and Zahid Hussain got me a seat on one of the refugees' planes going to West Punjab. Even though my destination was only Lahore, I was asked to pay full to and fro fare up to Peshawar—a distance three times as much. I was warned of the discomfort I would have to undergo, but I was prepared for everything. Later, that evening, he rang me up and confirmed the appointment and said that I should reach the airport by 4.00 a.m. as the plane was scheduled to take off at five in the morning. It was a very cold morning. I left for the airport, escorted by an armed guard from the Nizam's palace, and finally managed to reach there well before the given hour.

What I saw at the Palam airport of New Delhi is too tragic for words to describe. Thousands of refugees were there awaiting air

passage. In bitter cold, men, women and children, young and old, were all huddled together under the open sky. Everyone was either shivering or coughing or both. The children were screaming; women were shouting hoarse at one another. In some places, groups of old people had gathered round a "*hooka*" and were trying to smoke it in turn. Each one smoked, copiously coughed, and then passed on the reed to the other. The Customs examiner was trying to examine the luggage. The people did not seem to know where their belongings were. Some of them were carrying their precious bundles of clothing and bedding on their heads. The names of the passengers were being shouted without the help of any microphone but they were all spread so far and wide apart that the response was very poor. However, with great difficulty I managed to get near the booking clerk and showed him my ticket. He told me that the plane would not leave until after six and that I had better wait and come again an hour later. So, I had time to see more of the human misery and the heart-rending sights. At one point I saw a fellow shivering very badly. I felt sorry and went and asked him if he could not manage to creep under some shelter as he was shaking more than his frail frame was likely to withstand. He said he was not shivering of cold but at intervals he got nervous fits which shook his body. He then abruptly began to explain to me the anatomical phenomenon which causes such shivering from disturbed nerves. I did not feel particularly interested in the medical version of his shivering. He then started walking by my side and continued with his explanation. I began to suspect that he might be a spy and may even have some designs on me. I thereupon tried my best to get rid of him but did not succeed. He began telling me that he was going to Lahore by the five o'clock plane and that the plane had been delayed and would now leave after six. So, I thought to myself, I would have his company on the plane as well. He asked me when and where I would be going. I did not answer his question but that made no difference with him. I thought I would go and find out something more about the plane timings but he hung on to me and offered to go with me. Curiously enough he was shivering no longer and appeared very steady. I offered a cigarette but he said he did not smoke. He then started

again explaining more the medical version of shivering. I was not listening to him any more and let him talk as he liked.

At long last, about half past six we got on to the plane. As I had expected the man followed me and appeared very pleased that I was on the same plane. We all squatted on the floor. He came and sat next to me. There were no chairs or seats on the plane. They had all been removed to provide extra accommodation for passengers and their luggage. Old men, young men, old women, young women, any number of children, their belongings, food carriers, dried fruit bags, were all huddled together on the floor. I advised arranging the luggage in a proper manner so as to provide more space for the women and children to squat properly instead of one over the other. The idea was appreciated; in fact, they readily carried out all my instructions. In a few minutes everything was re-arranged. The re-arrangement also provided passage to the lavatory which was availed of by almost every passenger on the plane.

An old man was squatting right in front of us. My companion, who was quite normal by now, recognized him and addressed him by his name. The old man started looking around in surprise. My companion repeated his name and this time the old man got up and came close to us. He stared into the eyes of my companion. After a minute or so he began screaming, "Doctor Saheb! Doctor Saheb! Doctor Saheb! What has happened to you? What have you done with your beard! What have you done with your long whiskers?" "Hush! Hush!" said my friend and they soon got chatting. I gathered from their conversation that my somewhat unconventional companion was a practising physician of some repute. He had his own home and consulting rooms and dispensary in a fashionable quarter of New Delhi. During the disturbances the police had raided his house and wanted him to clear out. His wife and children were frightened so they went to his father-in-law's house which was in a Muslim locality of old Delhi. Only the doctor and two servants had stayed behind. He had found it difficult to give up the house and all his belongings so abruptly. Even during a second raid of the police he showed no intention of leaving the house. Then, one of the policemen produced a pistol and said the weapon had been found in one of the rooms

of the house, and, therefore, the doctor was under arrest. The other policemen were busy having a look around, and helping themselves to what they found. They even started quarrelling amongst themselves over sharing of their finds. This gave the doctor the opportunity to jump out of the window and escape. He managed to reach a friend's house nearby and hid himself for the rest of the night and the following day. Next evening, he appeared at his father-in-law's house. A day later he learned that there was a warrant of arrest against him. The best thing he could think of was to shave himself clean and attire himself in European dress. He thus very successfully changed his appearance. A few days later he was able to secure emigration permit and accommodation by air from the Pakistan High Commissioner, for himself and his family but on different planes. He had despatched his family in two batches a few days earlier and was now making good his own escape. I asked him what had happened to his servants. He did not know. He told me that he had made discreet enquiries and learned that his bank balances had also been frozen. He, therefore, had to borrow some money from his father-in-law and sell all the family jewellery for a few hundred rupees to pay for the air travel. He had also just learned that on the previous night his father-in-law and other inmates of his house had all been killed and their house and property taken over. As he narrated the events he started shivering once again. He again took upon himself the task of explaining to me that his nerves were the cause of his shivering fits. The shivering this time lasted almost till the end of the journey.

I had a feeling of sickness in my stomach over all that I had seen and heard. I wished that I hadn't undertaken the journey and deprived a refugee of his passage. At long last we were at Lahore. I thought I had seen enough of human misery and now there might be some relief. But it was not all over yet. At Lahore airport, and on both sides of the long winding road to the city there was one mass of humanity in agony and suffering. These were the remnants of the refugees who were able to complete the journey from East by air, by road, by rail, along cart tracks and along no tracks. I was told that most of them had travelled on foot. A number of those who had started on the journey were left behind along the roads to meet whatever fate

awaited them as they were too exhausted to proceed any further. Those who had survived the ordeals had at last reached Pakistan. What fate held in store for them they did not know. Of one thing they were certain—they were beyond the reach of their enemies!

CHAPTER II

WITH QUAID-E-AZAM AT LAHORE

IN LAHORE I came to know that the Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah was still unwell and was allowed by the doctors to see only very few people. He was also not to work more than an hour or so every day. However, it had been arranged that I should meet him between eleven and twelve that forenoon. This arrangement, it appeared, had been reluctantly agreed to by the doctors on his insistence, and on the express condition that he would do no further work for the rest of the day. Nevertheless our talks went on till after two in the afternoon despite repeated attempts on my part to end the conversation earlier. During our conversation, several persons reminded him that he was going much beyond the limits set by the doctors. Miss Jinnah herself appeared in the room twice and tried to end the conversations but that only made him sit up and issue stern orders that none was to enter the room unless he sent for them. At one stage, I felt that I should abruptly get up and run away from the place, but I did not have the courage to do so. Soon after the clock had struck two, he sat up in the chair and said he had been late for his luncheon and apologised for the fact that he was an invalid and couldn't ask me to join him. I lost no time, expressed my best wishes for his speedy recovery, and hurriedly left the room. Later, I learned that the strain of more than three hours of discussions with me had cost him a fresh attack of weakness and a rise in temperature which lasted for several days.

The conversations had centered for a while on the affairs concerning the United Nations. In the beginning he asked me to describe in detail all that had happened there and the details of the ceremony of Pakistan's admission to the U.N. But this lighter phase did not last for long and he began to cross-examine me and assess the reactions of other countries and their attitude towards Pakistan—more particularly of the U.S.A. and of U.S.S.R. He himself then gave me an account of the sorrowful events that had followed 'partition', and of the award in the matter of the division of Punjab

and Bengal, and how unjust he thought the award was. The conversation then moved on to various other subjects and finally centered on Hyderabad.

The Quaid had very definite views in regard to Hyderabad. He felt that the days of autocracy were over and the administration should therefore pass into the hands of the people without much delay. He felt that Hyderabad possessed heritage which should be a source of pride both to Hindus and Muslims of that country. The very fact that despite tense feelings and bloody riotings all over the sub-continent, conditions in Hyderabad had remained peaceful was, he regarded, sufficient proof of the truth, that Hyderabad, by virtue of its traditions, culture and inter-communal relations stood in a category apart. He believed that the Muslims and Hindus there should jointly shoulder the responsibility of the government and administration. He was certain that once the Hindus of Hyderabad had their full share in the responsibility of administering the State, it was most unlikely that they would wish to merge with the Indian Union by which they would have nothing to gain but a great deal to lose. He was not unmindful of the fact that in Hyderabad the Muslims were very much behind the Hindus in the field of commerce and other walks of life and at present the mainstay of their subsistence was services in various civil and military departments of the government. He thought that there should be a period of transition in which the Muslim community should be helped to find other avenues of occupation and the Hindus should be given greater share in public services and administration. He felt that parity of representation should immediately be introduced in the legislature, and all other ranks of services, and in due course a more stable and acceptable proportion established. He also felt that Hyderabad should try to maintain and hold its position as a great seat of culture and tradition and continue to give lead to the surrounding areas in every walk of life. He feared that conditions in central and southern provinces of India might force some of the Muslim population to migrate into Hyderabad and he hoped that Hyderabad would give them the shelter and protection that they may need. He believed that the very fact of Muslims in those areas finding themselves free to move into Hyderabad would create in them the

confidence and sense of security which was so much needed for their very existence and would eventually help them to stay where they were. The Hindu population in these areas also would take cognizance of this fact and would refrain from ill-treating the Muslim minorities. Not for a moment did he think it was necessary or advisable for Hyderabad to accede to Pakistan. He also did not see why India should force Hyderabad into accession to India. He felt that India would find a greater source of strength in a quasi-independent State of Hyderabad than by forcing the State into accession. He said the Indian leaders may possibly have certain misgivings about the attitude of Hyderabad in relation to India but he was certain that any such misgivings would soon prove to be baseless and, therefore, it was in the mutual interest of both India and Hyderabad to deal with each other in an honourable and generous manner and dispel mutual distrust. He expressed grave concern over the attitude of the Nizam in dealing with these matters and hoped that the Nizam would henceforth proceed prudently, cautiously and carefully. He definitely believed that the Nizam had weakened his position by his somewhat wavering attitude in the past and hoped he would not repeat those mistakes. He fully appreciated how important and necessary it was for Hyderabad and India to establish good relations early, and strongly advised that not only a proper "Stand-still Agreement" should be concluded soon but every attempt should be made to work it smoothly. He felt that a year's period of the "Stand-still Agreement", if properly utilized by the two sides, ought to give opportunity to both to adjust matters in an amicable manner and dispel all mutual doubts and suspicions. I drew his attention to the resolutions of the Hyderabad State Congress in which they had demanded Responsible Government and Accession to India. Jinnah fully appreciated the first part of the resolution; but believed that the second part could not possibly represent the true feelings of the Hindu masses of Hyderabad and must have only been adopted as a means to achieve the former and under direct pressure of the All-India Congress. It was true that a certain section of the Hindus believed that they would not be able to carry on the struggle for full Responsible Government in Hyderabad without the guidance and direct support of the more experienced

All-India Congress and for that the price may be accession to India. Jinnah felt that it was now for the Nizam and the Government of Hyderabad and the Muslims to proceed in a manner that under overwhelming pressure of public opinion the authors of the resolution may feel obliged to rescind the second part.

I casually mentioned during our conversations that some of my friends felt that I should take over the responsibility of forming the Ministry in Hyderabad and asked him what he thought of it. He promptly said that if he were certain of the Nizam's mind and his attitude he would have unhesitatingly said 'yes'. But, knowing the Nizam as he did, he would advise me not to. He further felt that as a free person I should be able to do a great deal more good to Hyderabad, and to the Muslim community at large and, in particular, to Pakistan. He thought there would certainly be other people available for the office of the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, and that he did not see any advantage from my own point of view in taking over that responsibility. He, however, ended by saying that it was really a matter that I should decide for myself in view of the circumstances, and that he could not but express his view only in very general terms. However, one thing he made very clear—that on no account should I accept the post unless I was approached both by Hindu and Muslim leaders, and not unless I was pressed and pressed hard by the Nizam himself, and that I should yield to nobody else's persuasion.

I then asked the Quaid if he thought India would go to the extent of using armed force in making Hyderabad accede to India. He said he did not like making prophesies but thought that was most improbable. Apart from the constitutional position under the Independence of India Act, he felt that the world opinion would go very much against India if she ever went to the extent of armed intervention in the affairs of Hyderabad. He concluded by saying that he would do everything in his power to help Hyderabad in building up honourable and lasting relations with India and securing a dignified political position for itself.

I stayed for the night with Liaquat Ali Khan and left Lahore the following morning. The return journey was comparatively uneventful. There were a few Sikh passengers and a few officials of the

Pakistan Government on the plane. I looked down from the plane but I saw no long columns of refugees moving along as I had expected to see. I was back in Delhi a little after mid-day and found Moin Nawaz Jung and his colleagues still busy at the drafts. They were anxious to know if I had any particular suggestions to make after my talks with Jinnah. I gave them a gist of my conversations at Lahore, but so far as the negotiations were concerned I had nothing specific to suggest. They all felt somewhat dismayed—they were hoping I would return from Lahore with something more concrete and inspiring.

CHAPTER III

HYDERABAD STATE AND THE NIZAMS

TO APPRECIATE the political significance of Hyderabad in the holocaust that had set in prior to and after the partition of India it is necessary to get a picture of the personal disposition of the Nizam, his relationship as a Ruler with his own government and the people, the various factors that were influencing him and his own influence within and on the world outside. The historical background laden of some seven centuries of Muslim political power and culture in the region is of no less importance and the relationship with the British spread over a century and a half both in theory and practice has a special significance.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century (A.D.) the Deccan plateau and its surrounding regions were divided into three kingdoms. The west was ruled by the Yadhavas, with their capital at Devagiri, (later on called Daulatabad) their territory comprising of the western portion of the Hyderabad State and a large part of the Province of Bombay. In the east, there was the Andhra Kingdom, with its capital at Warangal and the Rajah there ruled over the territory now forming the eastern part of the Hyderabad State and the northern part of the province of Madras. The southern kingdom called the Hosalyas comprised of the southern portion of the Hyderabad State and all western portions of the province of Madras and parts of the Bombay province, and included the present Mysore state, and the Rajah ruled from his seat at Devasamundram. The kingdom of Yadhavas was first invaded by Muslim armies towards the end of the thirteenth century under the generalship of Alladin Khilji who was then Governor of Oudh under the Emperor (and his uncle) Jalaluddin Khilji at Delhi. After the defeat of the armies of Rajah of Devagiri, a peace treaty was concluded and the Rajah undertook to remain loyal to the Emperor and to pay an annual tribute. Persistent defaults in the payment of the annual tribute by the Rajah invited another major invasion of the Muslim armies now led by General Malik Kafoor

under the orders of the Emperor Alladin Khilji, who had now succeeded his uncle to the throne at Delhi. Malik Kafoor not only took Devagiri but extended his conquests east and south and liquidated both the kingdoms of Warangal and Hoslayas. He was, however, mandated to secure the submission of all the three Rajahs and to reinstate them on their respective thrones bound in loyalty to the Emperor and on the undertaking of payment of annual tribute. Thus in the beginning of fourteenth century, excepting the southern most portions, almost the whole of southern India had come under the indirect rule of the Muslim Emperors of Delhi.

The Tughlaks succeeded the Khilji dynasty at Delhi and soon after abolished the indirect rule through the respective Rajahs and set up direct rule over the southern territories. In fact, for a short period they even shifted the capital from Delhi to Devagiri and named it Daulatabad. Later, although the Capital moved back to Delhi, the roots of the Muslim culture, besides of course political power, were once for all firmly established in the Deccan plateau and the surrounding regions. In the following periods when the central authority at Delhi disintegrated and numerous independent Muslim states sprang up all over India, the Bahamani Kingdom was set up by Hasan Gangoo with his Capital at Gulburga and covered almost the whole of the southern region north of Thungabhadhra river. The break up of this dynasty later led to formation of as many as five small Muslim kingdoms. Kutub Shahis with their seat at Golconda, Adil Shahis at Bijapur, Nizam Shahis at Ahmad Nagar, Barid Shahis at Bidar and Imad Shahis in Berar. After several inter-adjustments over a period of time they were all eventually conquered and brought under one rule by the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Rot set in Moghul dynasty after the passing away of Aurangzeb and climaxed in the invasion of Delhi by Nadir Shah from Iran. When Nadir ordered the general massacre of every living soul in Delhi and sitting in a mosque refused to sheathe his sword until the massacre was complete, Asif Jah, at the time the most revered nobleman of the Moghul court, bent over his knees and pleaded Nadir to stop the bloodshed. Nadir, turned round and said that only out of regard for the white beard of Asif Jah he would order slaughter to cease. Nadir,

soon after returned to Iran but the court intrigues at Delhi did not cease. Asif Jah when he found that there was little prospect of the political situation improving at Delhi, in disgust, decided to go south and was formally appointed Governor of Deccan from the Delhi Court. He halted at Aurangabad, on his way south, and the story goes that there he visited a Dervish (Muslim Saint). The Dervish had only a few dry pieces of bread to offer and he placed them before Asif Jah. Asif Jah, as a devotee, could manage to eat seven pieces in all. The Dervish then gave his blessings and asked Asif Jah to proceed on and prophesied that for seven generations his dynasty would rule the region. "*Kulcha*" as the dry pieces of bread were called, actually became the insignia of the State ever since. Hyderabad acquired more and more importance as the seat of Muslim culture and political power and after the so-called Mutiny of 1857, became the main sanctuary of the Muslim culture for the whole of the sub-continent.

The Asif Jahi dynasty, right from the beginning had a continuous struggle for survival. With the power dissipated at the Centre the Marathas were a serious threat on one side. The rival forces of the British and the French were exerting pressure in opposite directions. The successive Nizams had often to play one force against the other and in the process, the British consolidated their political paramountcy in effect, if not in theory. The successive Nizams yielded from time to time to the demands of the British in return for the protection offered by the British forces which were eventually stationed permanently close to the city of Hyderabad. A British Resident was posted in 1778 and kept a good eye ever since on all the successive Nizams. The relationship between the British and the Nizams was governed by a series of treaties and the British did never claim any other basis of relationship.

From about the middle of the eighteenth century Hyderabad exercised the status of an independent sovereign state waging war and entering into relations with other powers including the French and the British without reference to Delhi. When, for example, the Moghul Emperor proposed to cede certain territory within the state to the British without the consent of the Nizam, the cession was contested by the Nizam and the territory was recognised by the Treaty of Paris in

1763 as being under the Nizam's sovereignty.

As British dominance in India increased, the political history of Hyderabad became increasingly a history of its relations with the British. The relations were largely based on and were modified by treaties and agreements which were concluded from time to time. The first treaty between Hyderabad and the British was negotiated as far back as 1759, and this was followed by a succession of treaties right up to 1902.

These earlier treaties of alliance, culminated in the well known Treaty of Perpetual Alliance and Friendship of 1802 which inter-alia declared:

> **"the friends and enemies of either shall be the friends and enemies of both"**

By the earlier treaties of 1768, 1789 and 1798, the British undertook to maintain in Hyderabad, a subsidiary force to assist the Nizam in the defence of his Dominion. However, by virtue of all these treaties, apart from the exclusive right of the British Crown to represent Hyderabad in the realm of foreign affairs and apart from the over-riding powers claimed from the so-called 'paramountcy', the extent of which was always a matter of dispute, the relations between the Nizam and the British were in principle those of sovereign states.

Paramountcy has never been specifically defined; but it certainly gave expression to the over-riding suzerainty of the British Crown over the Indian Princely States. Perhaps the best definition ever given was by a British statesman when he said "*paramountcy is paramount*". At best it may be regarded as the powers and obligations assumed unilaterally by the British Crown as it became the dominant and ultimately the supreme power in India.

The paramountcy powers, defined or undefined, were exercised by the Viceroy as Crown Representative through his agent, the British Resident. The Crown, however, did not claim at any stage the right to make laws for Hyderabad. The territory of Hyderabad was never regarded as part of the Dominions of the Crown. The State of Hyderabad was styled as "Nizam's Dominions" and its subjects, in British Law, were never considered as British subjects but were claimed internationally as 'British Protected Persons'. Hyderabad always

had its own machinery of government, legislative, executive and judicial and there were no British organs of government functioning within it. It had its own army, police, customs, currency, post, communications, railways and other governmental services and at no stage the sovereign status of Hyderabad was challenged.

From almost the size of France, the British, had by successive amputations, on one pretext or the other, reduced the size of Hyderabad to almost that of Great Britain. The Nizams had submitted to such treatments from time to time owing to their physical, financial and personal weaknesses. So, minus such large slices of territory as of Berar, the 'Ceded Districts' of Kuddappa, Kurnool, Bellary and Ananthapur and most important of all the eastern districts which gave Hyderabad access to sea and to the rest of the world, the State had shrunk to some eighty three thousand square miles of area and a population of nearly eighteen millions with no outlet to sea or to the rest of the world except through the Indian territory. The State, rich in mineral wealth, with plenty of food and large exports of cotton and oil seeds, economically strong and industrially ahead of many other regions of India was indeed *beaute' du diable* to many and very much so to the communal minded leaders of the All India Congress on whom the vision of independence and absolute power was now dawning upon.

The British suzerainty and the resulting relation of paramountcy over Hyderabad came to sudden end with the passing of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 which categorically renounced all rights and obligations of the British Crown based on the then existing treaties and any other relationship that had subsisted. In law and practice, therefore, from that day, onwards, Hyderabad was an independent sovereign state and the Nizam stood bound to none by any treaty or obligation after all the existing ones had been unilaterally abrogated by the British.

Such was the situation faced by the present Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, seventh in the line of succession of the Asifjahi dynasty, who had ascended the throne in 1911. As a Ruler, he had over a third of a century's experience behind him. In the outside world he was only known as an autocratic ruler of the largest State in India and had the

reputation of being the richest man in the world. How, without any claim to that title or any effort on his part such a reputation came to be established, it is difficult to explain. He little cared what the world outside talked or wrote about him. Perhaps it was this indifference that roused the curiosity of most newspapermen and they pictured him as a very mysterious figure besides being the wealthiest person. This, however, was not true. In the realm of finances, his investments were limited although his cash holdings were disproportionately large. He had a very large and varied collection of ancestral jewellery and valuables—from 'Jacob diamond' down to petty ornaments. He possessed some priceless pieces of antiques along with a great deal of junk. How much that was all worth was never assessed and can be any body's guess. His net yearly income was of the order of some twentyfive million rupees—equivalent of about six to seven million dollars—and, on that he paid no income or any other tax. From that point of view he perhaps topped the list of the world's richest. Out of this income his savings were usually very substantial and were mainly hoarded in the form of bullion and currency notes and were partly invested in Indian and Hyderabad Government securities or time-deposits at low rates of interest in local banks. Outside his ancestral jewels and antiques and extensive landed property mostly within the State, the sum total of his cash possessions, I imagine, was between four and five hundred million rupees—say around one hundred million dollars. He has had almost a mania for effecting small savings, mainly by cutting down his personal and household expenses but in the final analysis all these savings did not amount to very much and were by no means worth the discomfort and unpopularity he suffered. Similarly, his anxiety and efforts to earn and hoard money were beyond all comprehension. The people still had the living memory of his father who probably used to spend and throw away money a lot more than his resources permitted. In contrast to him, therefore, the hoarding habit of the present Nizam lowered him considerably in public estimation and made him relatively unpopular.

The Nizam is a person of simple habits, takes only plain food in small quantities, sips tea all day long and is almost a chain smoker of cigarettes and is addicted to a regular but small dose of opium both

morning and night. He scrupulously follows his daily routine and is punctual almost to the minute. He used to keep himself fairly well informed on domestic and external politics, reads quite a lot—mostly newspapers and magazines—and occasionally writes poetry. Despite his "Harem" and a large family, he is a lonely man and, with the exception of an afternoon car ride in the City, hardly lends himself to any diversion in life. He is over sixty (in 1948) years in age, very frail in body but extremely active mentally and otherwise. Next only to money, the matter of utmost concern in his life was his personal power. With his age had grown his jealousy for power to such an extent that he hardly ever felt satisfied or allowed a free hand to his government. If any of his government functioned well and with effectiveness and force, he found the situation unbearable for himself and was constantly on the lookout to find loopholes by which he could snub and publicly discredit it. On the other hand, if the government happened to be weak and inefficient, he felt equally dissatisfied and hardly ever spared it. It was this tendency on his part coupled, of course, with certain excesses in the exercise of his authority that openly brought upon him the heavy hand of the British Crown Representative, and he had no course open other than to submit to both his reasonable and unreasonable demands. The British, of course, knew very well how to handle and squeeze him and to use him to their own advantage and, for that reason, at times, they deliberately shut their eyes to some of his excesses. On other occasions when they were more free to lay their hand on any of his weak spots, they spared no effort to openly discredit and humiliate him. Thus, the local agent of the British Crown Representative, called the "Resident", ever remained a cause of serious concern and a source of worry to the Nizam. With the passage of time, he had, of course, got seasoned to these circumstances and had got used to a life of which the British Resident became almost a necessary evil.

Time after time the Nizam changed his ministry in the hope of finding a machinery which would run the State better without overshadowing his own popularity and personal position and permitting him at the same time a free hand to exercise his own absolute authority and occasional excesses. Time after time he appointed new ministers

with great enthusiasm and the ministers took over their job with equal amount of zeal but every time both sides felt disappointed before long. The result of such a fluid situation was that the ministry in office always found it extremely difficult to concentrate on the job as no minister ever knew when any act of his would be subject to open censure or when he might be asked to resign. He started with Salar Jung soon after he had come to the throne but never felt happy with him. Salar Jung himself, yet in his twenties, found himself out of place and was guided—except in trivial matters—by a Britisher. Then came Kishan Pershad who had served his father for a long time and who, being always eager to please everyone, got on well for quite a time. Subsequently the Nizam got tired of the lethargic manner in which his administration was running and took upon himself the duties of the Prime Minister. The proposition suited him well. He could then himself exercise all the functions of the Government and not have to face the awkwardness of turning down or going against any of the proposals of the Government that were not to his liking. It had the added advantage, from his point of view, of a well earned Prime Minister's salary for himself. He would have liked to continue in that manner indefinitely, but the Crown Representative did not permit it for long. He was obliged to agree to the appointment of a proper Prime Minister to look after the administration and had to part both with the power and the salary of the Prime Minister.

With great hopes and expectations the place was filled by Sir Ali Imam, a seasoned politician and lawyer of repute from British India. Soon after Sir Ali's appointment, certain reforms were introduced in the administration and a Council of Ministers was formed. Powers were defined fully of the Ministers, of the President (as the Prime Minister now came to be styled), of the Council of Ministers and of the Nizam. The British, having completed this task, relaxed for a while hoping that the new system would work well. They could trust Ali Imam and besides they had other headaches in India at the time.

Ali Imam was a politician of vision and foresight. He, however, did not possess much executive or administrative experience which severely handicapped him at times. To make up this deficiency, he

imported a large number of executives from outside the State, a move which naturally made him considerably unpopular. The choice of some of the persons he had imported turned out to be bad and their indiscretions and misdeeds reflected back upon him. The net result was that despite his personal brilliance and honesty of purpose, the results of his endeavours were not very appreciable.

Ali Imam had soon found out that the Muslims in Hyderabad were in too small a minority and that if they and the dynasty of the Nizam were to survive, the first and foremost step was to numerically strengthen their position by encouraging migration of large number of Muslims into Hyderabad from other parts of India and to settle them in the large and very sparsely populated tracts in the northern and northeastern districts of the State. He, therefore, started what he called a colonization scheme. He made the scheme appear lucrative to the Nizam also by suggesting that the Nizam as a Ruler should himself receive a small royalty per acre from the colonists. The allotment of the lands carried with it special privileges such as the rights of exploitation of mineral wealth and of timber from the forests and so on. Rich businessmen from Bombay and other places who had not the vaguest idea of colonization or of the underlying policy, came forward and happily paid the small royalty and secured hundreds of thousands of acres. The Nizam, of course, received his dues but there was no colonization. Not many Muslims came from outside the State and all that Ali Imam achieved was to get a few families to the city of Hyderabad whom he appointed on lucrative government posts.

It is said that the Nizam at one time was seriously advised by the Aga Khan to effect a mutual exchange of territory with the Maharaja of Kashmir, of the Dominion of Hyderabad with the Kashmir State. His argument was that Kashmir being a predominantly Muslim State could alone secure the stability and continuity of the Nizam's dynasty. Whatever might have been the viewpoint of the Aga Khan it certainly did not fit in with the conditions then prevailing. Hyderabad was a homogeneous mass of the Hindus and the Muslims and there was no need at the time to seriously contemplate such a move. Moreover, after seven hundred years of the rule of the Muslims in Hyderabad their vested interests, historic, religious, cultural and material were

too deep rooted and no one could seriously think of giving up all these for any considerations. It was not just the case of the Nizam moving out with his wives and children and his movable belongings and planting himself in a palace in the capital of Jammu and Kashmir. There were very many formidable factors besides. For one, the Muslims, even though in a minority yet numbered some two and a half millions and they were not going to move out leaving behind their all.

The Nizam himself, despite all his shrewdness, did never fully appreciate the seriousness or the importance of these considerations. His approach to any problem concerning the minority position of the Muslims in the State was always casual. He was too engulfed in the day to day affairs and invariably felt satisfied if he got the better of his ministers in any administrative matter of which instances were not few. His interviews with the British Resident which used to come about once every three weeks were also a matter of serious concern for him and whether or not they went on well had a definite bearing on his approach to his other problems. A detailed report on the daily occurrences was directly furnished to him by the police chief first thing every morning and sometimes he knew things before the Prime Minister or the concerned Minister knew of them. He felt quite happy if Bahadur Yar Jung or some other political leader gave hell to his government and would read with great interest every word of such a speech or statement, but he would feel unduly disturbed if there was any reference made to himself by any political leader no matter how indirect or casual that be.

The Nizam, as a ruler, was an extremely well informed person. He always started the day early and the first thing in the morning he used to run through the newspapers of the day and make his own notes about all the important news items and systematically file them himself. He generally preferred reading English papers. Among the local Dailies, the English edition of the 'Meezan' and the Urdu "Rahber" were his first choice. Later in the day other papers were furnished to him with items of special interest marked out for him. He also read books and magazines of all kinds that suited his taste. He kept himself fully conversant with the gossips and scandals of the

town and local society. In this respect, his courtiers, of which there were quite a few, played an important role. The police chief had also his turn in posting him up with the local news items. Each morning he had half an hour for the police chief, one to two hours for the courtiers and then the rest. Every conceivable subject was discussed on such occasions—from international high level politics to the rumours of forthcoming wedding engagement or the worth of the dowry presented by so and so to his daughter or the number of persons that attended a certain function, or the particular lady doctor who looked after some special maternity case. The courtiers used to go well prepared for the day's interview. There were petty jealousies among them too and if a suitable opportunity occurred they would not spare each other. There were also political and party considerations among the courtiers and each had his own affiliation. The Nizam, however, was extremely shrewd in assessing the worth of his courtiers and invariably sensed if any attempt was made to influence his views. He would lead them on to a certain point but he always knew where to stop and could freely snub them when he thought it fit.

The courtiers of the Nizam ever remained a source of serious concern and even worry to every Prime Minister in office. Happily the audience with the courtiers was always collective, so each one knew all that was said and discussed. Most ministers and of course the prime minister had one or the other of the courtiers as his own favourite and no sooner the day's audience was over the gist of the conversation was relayed by the courtiers to the respective minister. Invariably these reports served as an index of the confidence that the Government enjoyed with the Ruler. They also confirmed whether a particular minister or a person was in good or bad books of the Ruler. No one could foresee which particular thing the Nizam was going to disclose or keep secret. Not infrequently he would blurt out or give some hint about an important political or administrative secret and before the day was over that top secret matter would be the talk of the town. Yet, on other occasions he would be so non-communicative that no matter how hard or skilfully the courtiers manoeuvred the conversation they could not get the slightest inkling of what was passing in his mind.

During the hey-days of Bahadur Yar Jung, the Nizam had definitely got jealous of him. So, when on one or two occasions the government wanted to take action against him, he very gladly endorsed the policy. He felt annoyed and unhappy at times that the government would not take strong enough measures against him even though the provocation happened to be very slight. He was fully alive to the dangers of any particular leader gaining too much power and support from the people and inwardly he would make moves that would encourage the rival groups to undo his popularity or undermine his public opposition. He was told at one time that Bahadur Yar Jung might become a Mussolini of Hyderabad and he fully believed that it might be so and spared no effort to undermine his personal position and prestige. At the same time, he wanted to make use of Bahadur Yar Jung to keep his own Ministers in check. Some say that the Nizam felt greatly relieved and was even glad at the death of Bahadur Yar Jung. This disposition he maintained towards all popular leaders, whether Hindu or Muslim.

The Nizam is possessed of shrewd political consciousness. He is a rational thinker and a cool analyser of facts and logical integrator of events to concrete conclusions. He is brisk in action and once he arrives at any conclusion he does not like to wait. At times he even becomes hasty. He is religious-minded but has an amazing capacity for understanding and tolerance for the faith and beliefs of others. He is equally tolerant of personal freedom. There have been many occasions when things happened very much to his dislike and yet he took the attitude that the person responsible was perfectly within his or her right to act that way and he had no right to interfere. The volume of his official work never worried him and he could dispose it of all with ease and confidence. In fact he appeared unhappy if he did not have enough worries on his mind. The delay, if any, at his end, in the disposal of official work of the state could always be traced back to his office but never to himself. There were very rare occasions when he would hold back any case, but if he ever did it was always for some serious administrative or political reason.

Despite his extremely despotic nature and occasional excesses, the Nizam has invariably showed remarkable respect for constitution and

for correct procedure. Even if a proposal appeared to him *prima facie* —wrong or illogical, as a rule, he returned it back for clarification or recommended reconsideration, but very rarely over-ruled it outright. Unless the issue was very grave or there was something concerning him personally, he invariably accepted the proposals sent to him by the Government even if they were not to his liking. In his own right he could always over-rule the Government but he seldom exercised that authority. His way of achieving his ends was always indirect and circuitous; but he ever kept himself within the frame-work of constitution and procedure. Very often he used to exhibit an amazing amount of tolerance towards personal factors and human element and yet, at times he could be outspoken to the extent of being rude. On certain occasions he could make definite suggestions to the Government if he felt the Government had lost sight of any matter or was not paying adequate or prompt attention to it. Towards the Ittehad he had mixed feelings and he disliked the external association of the State Congress. He used to make a careful study of every speech or statement issued by the popular leaders and drew his own conclusions and methodically maintained himself a careful and systematic record of all important events. He had excellent memory and could readily lay his hand on any record with the least effort.

It had repeatedly been alleged by some people that the Nizam had secret associations with the Ittehad organization. They seem to overlook the fundamental fact that the Nizam by nature and habit has always been an autocrat and jealous of his own and his family's position. As such, any widespread democratic or political movement could be least to his liking. And, with his own money, he would part for nobody. The fact of the matter was that his likes or dislikes of the Ittehad movement were no less and no more than what he openly displayed. He distrusted all political agitation and was, not infrequently, critical of the speeches of Qasim Razvi. When Qasim Razvi made a few violent speeches he privately but sternly warned him and told him plainly that such pronouncements would not be tolerated. Had the attitude of the Nehru-Patel Government of India been a little less uncompromising he might even have taken a firmer action: with that attitude, hardening each day as it was, he could take no risks.

Dearest to the Nizam, throughout his life, has been his own money and possessions and next to that his power. All other considerations were secondary. Any agency or organization was good if his own authority and power were not challenged; otherwise, true to the traditions of the orient, he would design and plan ways and means to deal with it. He intensely hated the manner in which the British Residents and the Crown Representative had undermined his authority and disgraced him openly, but silently put up with it. He had a remarkable capacity for endurance and of marking time and of adjusting himself to calmly face some of the severest trials of life. At times, when he was faced with critical and major political issues, he could baffle his friends and foes by his complete indifference and disregard and on such occasions would particularly indulge and drown himself in trivial domestic and family affairs! In this background and with such disposition he was heading on with his country to meet events following the decision of the British to leave India. Even well before the issue of partition of India had been decided, the machinations of the Indian Congress leaders to assimilate the State had actively started. The continuation of a progressive semi-independent state with a Muslim bias in the heart of pre-dominating Hindu India was unbearable to the Hindu overlords. How the Nizam reacted to these forces and how he was confronted with momentous issues in rapid succession, is dealt in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV

HYDERABAD STATE CONGRESS, HINDU MAHASABHA & OTHERS

THE ONLY common factor in the objectives of the diversified political struggles of the heterogeneous racial and communal admixture of the undivided India was to get rid of the "British Rule". Within the All-India Congress also it was the only rallying point which brought together people who would otherwise not go near each other. This objective strengthened the organization from outside and sustained its unity from within. Otherwise, the distrust between the various communities which constituted the teaming millions of the sub-continent, and the inherent hatred of the down-trodden Hindu low-castes for the dominant and oppressive high-castes could never sustain the size or force of that political body. No one appreciated this fact better than the high-caste Hindu leaders who controlled the organization and no one could have exploited the situation more than they did. To raise the issue of rights of other communities and of the low-caste Hindus amounted to the prolonging of the British Rule—to tamely accept the bidding of the high-caste Hindus meant perpetuating their domination and exploitation. The dilemma in which the low-caste Hindus and other communities found themselves continued unresolved. The accumulated wealth in the hands of the high-caste Hindus enabled them to consolidate their position and to hold their sway.

The outlook of the Hindu community in Hyderabad was materially different owing to the very different circumstances in which they lived. Here the Hindus as a whole enjoyed a very overwhelming majority; the land, commerce and industry were almost entirely in their hands. In the presence of a live Muslim culture, the intolerance of caste system was comparatively less pronounced. They were not directly under the "British", so to a man in the street the issue of alien rule was somewhat academic. Compared to most parts of India, their economic conditions were better—enough food, some shelter and clothing was available to everyone and despite poverty, there was no serious discontentment among the masses. However, the Hindus

had one legitimate grievance—compared to their proportion in population, their representation in higher ranks of public services was very inadequate and the high-caste Hindus particularly felt bitter over it. The fact that the Nizam, the head of the State, was a Muslim annoyed some of the Hindus; but the number of those who felt that way was very small and of no significance. There was, of course, the instinctive urge for a more democratic form of government, but by centuries of tradition the autocracy of the Nizam had been so tempered that it did not give rise to any serious reactions. The urge for the immediate establishment of a fully democratic institution was confined to a few among the top intellectuals. To the rest and to the populace at large it was a matter of academic interest. The absence of *raison d'etre* of a popular and major political struggle made the work of the more ambitious high-caste Hindu leaders greatly difficult. Their imagination was fired and their activities spurred by the successes attained by their counterparts in the British administered India. Like them, they also wanted to come in the limelight, but each time they tried they failed to present a real issue on which they could arouse active and extensive public support.

There were several well established Hindu political organisations in Hyderabad and some of them were of quite old standing. The more important ones had fairly large membership but they were invariably linked up with one or the other institution in British ruled India and owed their allegiance to it and drew their inspiration from that source as well as financial assistance and operational directives. This was particularly so with the Hyderabad State Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. Throughout the history of these and similar institutions, their leaders were more devoted to the parent organizations in British ruled India and in vain tried to arouse public enthusiasm over issues that were of burning interest in that territory, but of little significance and at best of academic value in Hyderabad. The allegiance of the leaders of these Hyderabad organizations resulted from more than one factor. They depended upon the parent institutions not only for their moral and ideological sustenance but also financial and operational, as well as personal needs. They had little or no understanding of the issues that would have touched the core of the

local Hindu populace—in matters where they did have the realization, their course of action was dictated by superior authorities in British ruled India who were engulfed in their own problems and had little time or thought for any real affairs of Hyderabad.

Under these circumstances lack of the realistic approach to the problems of Hyderabad was the main cause of ineffectiveness of the Hindu political organizations and time after time resulted in failure and frustrations of their leaders. These leaders were often blamed for their inaction and incapacity by the parent organizations in the British ruled India. Often the reason for failure was also made out to be lack of political consciousness of the Hindu masses—rarely if ever did anyone try to be realistic and understand the true facts or correctly assess the sentiments of the masses. The more shrewd persons kept themselves aloof from the remote controlled activities and the leadership of these organizations continued to remain in less capable and unsuitable hands. Outstanding personalities such as Mrs. Sirojani Naidu and others found a greater scope of their talents in British controlled India and kept themselves a good distance away from the ill-directed local activities. Wrongly guided by their principals and unable to chalk out any dignified or effective path for themselves, the leaders of the Hyderabad Hindu organizations thought that the easiest thing for them to do was to inculcate communal hatred. The idea was actually sponsored by the central organizations in the British ruled India and under their direction the local leaders started to work on it vigorously. At first it looked like they were going to succeed but it soon dawned upon them that in a non-communal minded population it was not going to be so easy. With failure staring in the face they soon came down to less dignified methods of spreading of complete falsehoods and total untruths. They said that the Hindus in Hyderabad did not have the freedom to wear white robes or ride on horseback; that Muslim officials were grossly corrupt and were causing havoc and devastation on the Hindu masses. These and many others were such gross lies that their authors soon got discredited in the eyes of the populace. Actually, the village officials were invariably Hindus and they were the men with whom the masses were in direct contact. The people knew that redress against the high handedness of their imme-

diate Hindu officials could always be had at the hands of the Muslim superior officers. So, the entire idea of Muslim officers being corrupt and cruel soon came to be ridiculed and no one took any notice of the propaganda. However, these activities had one effect—a large number of people in the British ruled India were influenced by the propaganda and they began to believe that the conditions in Hyderabad were really bad and that it was the duty of all the Hindus to help their brethren in distress.

In 1937 the British felt that they had to concede at least a part of their authority to the people of India and accordingly introduced what was called the "Provincial Autonomy"—in other words, within the limits of the provincial affairs the people could rule themselves in whatever manner they liked. This step forward in the neighbouring areas stimulated certain of the Hindu political leaders in Hyderabad and they began to look around for new political objectives and new avenues for their activity. The All-India Congress had achieved the first major and positive success in its history and had assumed power under the "Provincial Autonomy". Congress governments were now set up in all the three surrounding provinces of Hyderabad and were in a positive position to render effectively moral and material help to any allied political institutions in Hyderabad. They were indeed anxious to do what they could and the first step they considered was to create a disturbed atmosphere and do something spectacular that would capture the imagination of the masses. The objects and the means to achieve them could be defined and determined later. The technique of mass civil disobedience of law and order which was given the name of "*Satyagraha*" and had achieved immeasurable success against the British, was planned for Hyderabad. However, it had taken many years to develop and mature that technique in British Ruled India: in Hyderabad first of all there did not exist sufficient cause for which mass sacrifices could be invoked nor were there trained and organized volunteers to carry out "*Satyagraha*". It was therefore agreed that the movement should be jointly sponsored by the various political organizations in Hyderabad and that the All-India Congress would send batches of trained Satyagrahists from across the border. The Hyderabad State Congress, the Hindu

Mahasabha and the Arya Samajists all joined hands and launched the movement. The response within the country itself was almost nil and it looked as if the movement would die unnoticed. But, fortunately for the sponsors, the Congress governments had firmly settled themselves in all the neighbouring Provinces and they were eager to do their share in making the movement in Hyderabad a success. Despite the fact that this course of action had been decided upon by the All India Congress, the active help coming from Madras and Central Provinces was poor. However, the position was different with Bombay. Here, in the new Congress government, the direction of the movement was placed in the hands of K.M. Munshi, Home Minister, who years afterwards on account of the success achieved by him on this occasion, was selected as the most appropriate person to fill up the post of the Agent General of India at Hyderabad. Munshi exhorted thousands of young volunteers from all over the Bombay Presidency, gave them all the help and encouragement that governmental sources could provide and supplemented with assistance that could come forth from numberless public sources, under the inspiration of the government. The task of these volunteers was simple. They only had to enter the State, wear a garland of flowers, go to a public place in any town and break the laws or rules of the place in some manner or other. They had been told that they would be well looked after in the jails of the Nizam and the Government of Bombay would see that they are in no way ill treated. They were also assured that during their absence their families would be suitably financed and fully taken care of.

At first the movement gave the Government of Hyderabad some headache. A few thousand "Satyagrahis" volunteers who had infiltrated through the border were arrested and the Government had to take some severe security measures all along the borders. It, however, became apparent before long that the movement had no local backing whatsoever and in a few days' time even the Bombay Government's encouragement and the huge finances of All-India Congress and other Government inspired agencies of the Bombay Province, could not produce sufficient number of volunteers. The sponsors of the movement, much to the dismay of the Home Minister of

Bombay, decided to give it up as a bad job. The Government of Hyderabad also, despite being confident of the ultimate outcome was eager to see the end of the nuisance. As a result of mutual inclination, some sort of a truce was arrived at between the political parties concerned and the Government, to call off the movement. To save their face, the sponsors of the movement kept on claiming that they had scored a great victory. The Government of Hyderabad having got over the immediate worry, ignored their claims and the whole affair fizzled out and was forgotten in a few days time.

The movement, however, created one thing that did not exist before—seeds of communal bitterness were firmly planted between the Hindus and the Muslims all along the bordering areas and more particularly in the Western Districts that lay adjacent to the Bombay province. Perhaps, despite the obvious failure of the movement, the real purpose of the All India Congress and its more ardent champions, like K.M. Munshi, had been achieved. The people of the State did not like the "*Satyagraha*" movement. The Muslims, of course, hated it not only because it was directed against the Nizam's rule, but also due to the fact that wherever they could, the intruding "Satyagrahis" had inflicted personal injuries on the life and property of the Muslims and by singling them out as their target, they had brought about a feeling of estrangement between them and the Hindu neighbours, who otherwise had lived together in peace and harmony for centuries. The Ittehad, the Muslim political organisation in the State was annoyed with the government for not having dealt with the movement as firmly as it deserved and they felt that the events had justified their stand for claiming better protection and rights for their minority community. In this stand, however, they got too ardent and made a political capital out of the affair and started slogans based on the events to promote their party's cause with a view to bring about quicker political awakening among their fellow religionists. In the press and on the public platform the Ittehad leaders recounted in vivid detail the events of the Satyagraha and told the Muslims what could happen to them on account of their minority position if they did not wake up and organize themselves properly. It was not long before the slogans of the Ittehadis evoked the natural reaction of the Hindus,

who started looking at everything with a greater communal bias. And, so, the objective of the All-India Congress was fully gained. They had paved the way for the future. K.M. Munshi, a vernacular writer of fiction invariably coloured with strong communal hatred, found good material to write more of his novels to foster communal bitterness.

After the end of the episode which, except for planting communal disharmony had not otherwise been successful, the Hyderabad State Congress and other Hindu political organizations went into slumber again. Their leaders were not for a long time able to find a cause that could invoke sufficient response of the masses. Soon after these events the World War II started and with it grew more the disagreement between the All India Congress and the British. The British did not want trouble when their hands were fully tied up at the other side. The Congress knew that this was the only opportunity for them to act. The British stiffened their attitude. Provincial autonomy came to an end and the rule of Congress ministries in the various Provinces was over. Then followed mass arrests of the important leaders of the All India Congress and with that, the Hyderabad State Congress and the Hindu political organizations were deprived of their source of inspiration, command and assistance. To the Government of Hyderabad the War gave a great respite in their internal matters. Both the "Ittehadis" and the Hyderabad State Congress became quiet for the time being. Only some half-hearted attempts continued in the meantime for a political settlement between the Ittehad and the Congress leaders. The "Ittehadis" insisted that the Congress leaders should come forth with a definite mandate as previous experience had shown that each time a settlement was arrived between its leaders and "Ittehadis" those particular leaders were summarily disowned by the Hyderabad Congress under the direction of the All-India Congress and a new set came in their place to start the negotiations de novo. Congress on the other hand complained that the "Ittehadis" did not mean business and on every occasion when there was a possibility of settlement, the Ittehadis would raise new issues. The fact of the matter was that there was nothing concrete placed on the table by either side. The Government on the other hand found it convenient

to shelve, in the name of war, the issues of constitutional reforms that had created lively and conflicting interests among all the political parties. With the momentous objective put out of sight for the time being, there was little realism left in the slogans and activities of the various political parties and with it also vanished any serious approach towards settlement. Even in casual discussions, each party felt that if they gave in, in any way, that would be taken as a show of weakness on their part. Whenever "Ittehadis" accommodated any viewpoint of the Congress, that became the starting point in further negotiations and new leaders came forward to continue the discussions onwards from the ground so conceded.

Never perhaps in the history of politics has any organization done so little and yet gained so much importance merely on the score of the name that it adopted for itself as the Hyderabad State Congress. The name "Congress" in the British ruled India on account of its mass struggle against the British, had become an object of psychological attraction and had gained a romantic appeal to everybody. The Hyderabad State Congress had neither the leadership nor any constructive well defined objective nor the organization nor any spirit of sacrifice manifested at any time throughout its history. It thrived on its name, existed on the funds supplied by the All-India Congress and acted on the directives received. Other Hindu organizations that were better organized had better leadership and had exhibited constructive thinking and a much greater degree of sacrifice remained in the background for the simple reason that they happened to exist under some other names.

After the start of the World War II, like the All-India Congress, the Hyderabad State Congress remained in the background till well after the end of the War. It rose up after a long slumber only when the parent body came into limelight again. After a long gap of some years, the Hyderabad State Congress held its public session early in 1947. By that time the talks between the leaders of India and the Cripps' Mission sent by the British to decide upon the future of India, had well advanced. The long cherished freedom of India was within sight and the position of the Indian States was receiving close and active attention of the All-India Congress leaders. A directive had

been issued to the various State Congress organizations that they had to pave the way for the accession of the States to the Indian Union when it comes into being. The Hyderabad State Congress had no voice in the policy—it had only to carry out the orders of the All India Congress. Resolutions were, therefore, passed at the open session defining the aims of the Hyderabad State Congress as "Accession to Indian Union" and "Responsible Government". There was, during the meeting, a tie for the presidentship of the Hyderabad State Congress. An old worker of the Congress and widely respected person who was also a son of the soil was contesting the election against Swami Ramanand Tirth who did not have any particular attachment to Hyderabad. In the voting, the story goes, that B. Ram Kishen Rao, the rival of the Swami, when handed over the ballot paper wrote the name of the Swami out of courtesy. The Swami, of course, was not so charitable and wrote his own name. The result was that the Swami was declared elected by majority of one solitary vote over his rival, Ram Kishen Rao.

Swami Ramanand Tirth's original name was something different. As a school teacher of one of the Western Districts of the State, he took active interest in the affairs of the local Congress and was regarded as a zealous lower rank worker. He possessed no particular qualities of leadership and as a public speaker ranked among the ordinary. He was ambitious but knew his limitations as well. He understood the Hindu public mind and realized that with his other limitations there was little chance in the normal way of his coming to the fore-front. He, therefore, decided to play on the religious susceptibilities of the masses and assumed for himself the title of Swami—a religious rank among the Hindus, and associated himself with the temple of Ramanand Tirth. That is how he became Swami Ramanand Tirth. He probably cherished the ambition of attaining the order of "Mahatma" some day and get himself ranked high like Mahatma Gandhi. Having so established himself as Swami, he shrewdly took steps that focussed public attention on to him. He prepared a local programme of *Satyagraha*—mass civil disobedience of law and order, and after collecting a few school boys proceeded with the campaign on a small scale. The movement had no force in itself and had the Government's local

administration just ignored it, it would have very soon died its natural death as subsequent attitude in such cases proved. Instead, the administration gave undue importance to trivial incidents and started mass arrests and detentions on minor causes. Many people were detained against whom there was nothing concrete. This false move on the part of the administration gave an undue publicity to the movement and went a long way to unpopularize the Government among the masses. It also gave the opportunity for corruption and high handedness to local Police officials. A very unfortunate state of affairs indeed ensued.

The Swamy managed to get himself interned and became a hero purely on that account. His lieutenants went across the border into British ruled India and settled down there under the name of a "Committee of Action". Those who had so fled across received the fullest patronage of the All India Congress. That organization, with the prospect of a free India in sight had become a mighty force. Behind the name of the so-called "Committee of Action", the All India Congress really took active steps. They organized raids from across the border into the Hyderabad territory and numberless skirmishes began to take place. All the members of the "Committee of Action" were liberally financed and they began to lead a comfortable, idle and expensive life, much to the disgust of the more serious minded members of the State Congress who had remained behind in Hyderabad. The All-India Congress provided ample funds and material needed for the campaign, and chosen, capable and experienced hands engineered the armed raids all along the borders of the State. The members of the "Committee of Action" remained content to watch the others do the job. Indeed, so used had they got to the luxurious and idle life they had been leading that when the ban was lifted on the State Congress in Hyderabad early in December, 1947, and all those that had been interned released, these gentlemen, despite the full assurance of their safety conveyed to them, continued to remain where they were.

The Hyderabad State Congress had always claimed that they followed in Mahatma Gandhi's footsteps and strictly adhered to non-violence. Yet, the "Committee of Action" of the Hyderabad State Congress proudly published towards the end of November, 1948, a

list of their many achievements which included attacks on 175 police outposts, cutting off the railway communication in 120 places and destruction of 615 customs and police outposts (Times of India of 29th November 1948). Actually, all these destructions and many others were organized and carried out by the numberless people hired by the All-India Congress. The "Committee of Action" were no more than distant onlookers, and rejoiced over the happenings from a safe distance.

The Swami was released early in December of 1947. A few days later he left for the now Indian Union territory after making a public statement that he was going to consult his "Committee of Action". Month after month, his ardent followers and admirers waited for his return, but the consultations were not over. He went to Delhi and was told off by the overlords there that the contribution of the State Congress had been nought in their plans against Hyderabad. He realized that there was no room for him in those higher strata of Delhi and decided to return to Hyderabad after an absence of four months to find that here also his stock had gone very low. He decided to restart *Satyagraha* but could command no followers. He could bear no longer the inconspicuous position into which he had receded and as a last resort decided to proceed with the breaking of law himself. He was strongly advised by his own friends not to do anything which might lead to deterioration of law and order at such a critical time, but he was honest enough to admit that he had no career left other than courting arrest himself. He felt that his stock in the eyes of the public had gone so low that he had to do something drastic to restore his position as a leader. He thus got himself arrested again and remained locked in until the day that Hyderabad surrendered to the armed forces of the Indian Union. His other colleagues—the members of the "Committee of Action", did not return to Hyderabad till a much later date when it was established beyond doubt that they would now be safe in every respect. They all came back expecting that the masses would receive them as saviours and national heroes; but no one took notice of them and they were completely ignored. The masses knew better!

CHAPTER V

BAHADUR YAR JUNG & ITTEHADUL MUSLIMIN

REACTION on the part of the Muslims to the intensely communal activities of the Hyderabad State Congress, Mahasabha and other Hindu political organisations, all engineered from their parent institutions in British India, was only a natural corollary. Prior to this there was hardly any political activity among the Muslims of Hyderabad. There were no corresponding Muslim organisations in British India to effectively influence or pilot the activities of the Muslims in Hyderabad. As a matter of fact, Muslim League was the only organised body outside and that had started gaining momentum and weight mainly from the narrow mindedness and stupidities of All-India Congress and the provocative acts of other Hindu organisations. Who can say that had better sense prevailed among the leaders of the All-India Congress and had they shown reasonable tolerance and been a little more generous to the minority communities, events may not have culminated in the partition of the country. The narrow mindedness of the Hindu leaders and their short sightedness, more than any thing else, was responsible for uniting the Muslim minority in India and strengthening the Muslim League as a political organisation and hardening its attitude in the final bargain.

It was a similar situation in Hyderabad. The Muslims here, who had never felt any worse for their minority position suddenly began to feel that if the Hindu majority unites in its communal outlook and is led to aggressive and non-tolerant frame of mind by the narrow minded leaders on the other side of the borders, things might become difficult for them and might threaten their very existence unless they unite and be ready to face any such eventuality. Normally, such political consciousness would have taken considerable time to develop but the dynamic leadership that was thrown up, accomplished the job in an amazingly short span of time.

Bahadur Yar Jung was mainly responsible for the political awakening of the Muslims of Hyderabad through the creation of the "Itteha-

dul-Muslimin", a political organization which may be translated as "Unity of Muslims". Subsequently, the movement was popularly styled simply as "Ittehad". I had known Bahadur Khan, as he then was in my early school days. He was probably of the same age as myself and I remembered him as an unusually stout and unshapely lad. He came of a rich and aristocratic family. We lived in the same part of the city and went in the same direction but to different schools. After that, I had no occasion to meet him until he became the leader of a live political movement. One hot summer evening we accidentally got together on a train journey. After self-introduction and a few formalities we began conversing freely. He told me that he knew enough of me even though we had had no occasion to meet. Of course I knew a lot of him too. I reminded him of our school days; he, too, remembered me well and the old school days. He cheerfully admitted what a fat ugly figure he used to be and said I was being polite if I did not remind him of his ungainly appearance. We did not discuss any politics nor any other serious subject—yet we seemed to like each other. After that I met him a number of times but invariably we talked on general matters and hardly ever discussed any specific political issue. One day he asked me if I was interested in politics and I told him not particularly. He never asked me to join the Ittehad organization even after we had become more familiar. Some years later, we got closer and discussed more freely economic, political and various other matters. Each time we met I was impressed by his remarkable grasp of any new subject thrown at him. I always found it difficult to reconcile myself to the fact that this was the same burly lad that we used to throw pebbles at in our childhood. He had developed into a tall impressive personality and had become a powerful orator of the highest order. He was always confident that by his power of speech he could swing round any large gathering into whatever direction he wished to and this proved to be perfectly true. At times he would show off a little vanity in small matters such as being fastidious in his likes and dislikes of food and fruits and dress and servants. Otherwise he was always modest and convincingly sincere without much effort on his part. On a few occasions in our private conversations, I severely criticized his public policy, but he

never took it ill. On the contrary, he paid the utmost heed to my criticism and not infrequently accepted my views and put them forthwith into action. Occasionally he would drop in and ask me what I thought of such and such an issue. He had his own views, but was always prepared to see the viewpoint of others and was ever open to correction. He had the courage to admit openly if he felt he was in the wrong. In any discussion, he always had clear-cut issues before him and would never lose sight of them. Very rarely he lost his temper and never believed in raising large funds for any public cause. On very few occasions he came to me for monetary contributions but when he did it was always for a definite cause such as helping an orphanage or assisting a school or some such very defined object. His demands were infrequent and were always so modest that one could never say no to them. Sometimes he used to send a brief slip saying that he needed a few hundred or a few thousand rupees without indicating the purpose for which he needed the money. Invariably I complied. It was hardly necessary, but each time he rendered the full account of the monies he received. It might be a case of helping someone in a disaster in the nick of time; may be of assisting someone at the last minute in his daughter's wedding or of helping some students with their college fees, or saving someone from losing his house under a court decree. I do not recollect any occasion on which he asked for contribution for any of his political mission. He either financed such movements himself—his personal fortune was sizeable—or collected a levy from his more ardent followers. One thing, however, is certain that he ran his political mission with very little finances—a fact which always baffled his opponents. He used to say that in economy lay his success and the future salvation of his community.

One night, at a dinner party at the Nawab of Chattari, suddenly the news came that Bahadur Yar Jung was dead. No one could believe it, so we quickly had it checked up. Yes, Bahadur Yar Jung had suddenly died at a dinner party at one of his friends' house. After getting the shocking news confirmed, we all began to disperse hurriedly and Ghulam Mohammed and I decided to go and see things for ourselves. When we arrived at the scene of the tragedy, already a large crowd had gathered. Some of his friends were lamenting loudly.

The host himself appeared dumb-founded and in a miserable mess. There were open remarks about some foul play. Ghulam Mohammed and I stood there numbed for about an hour. We could hardly speak—it was all too sad for words. The following morning there was a big argument as to whether there should be a post-mortem of the body or not. Finally it was decided that the burial would take place without a post-mortem. The Nizam who invariably attends all important funerals was of course there. In his presence, two mourners in particular were very conspicuous by their unrestrained lamentations—even more so than the nearest relations of the deceased. Incidentally, both of them later turned out to be the claimants of the public place held by Bahadur Yar Jung.

The funeral of Bahadur Yar Jung drew a crowd such as was never before witnessed in Hyderabad. There were people of all castes and creeds and, on both sides of the miles long procession the house roofs and windows were packed with spectators. Perhaps there was not the tiniest shop in the whole city that had remained open. There was sorrow all over. Soon after the burial, came up the all-important question as to who should succeed Bahadur Yar Jung as President of the Ittehad. The Ittehad organization had secured for itself an important place in the life of the country and anyone at the head of that organization would command appreciable political influence. Bahadur Yar Jung himself possessed profound knowledge of Islamic ethics and as such could over-rule the highest of the theological order in any discussion. His oratory had earned for him enviable fame not only in India but also in most of the Middle Eastern countries. His integrity and sincerity were beyond all reproach and commanded high esteem from his co-religionists and others alike. He was solely responsible not only for the building up of the Ittehad organization but for the creating of a very high degree of political awakening and discipline in the Muslims of Hyderabad. He could take big decisions and get them almost unanimously accepted and implemented by his community. During his lifetime, there were people who were jealous of his position, but no one had the courage to stand up against him. He had rejected the plan that had been discussed under the auspices of some very notable personalities between Abul Hasan Syed Ali and

the Leaders of the Hindu community and everyone had applauded Bahadur Yar Jung for it and had started suspecting Abul Hasan. Yet he had the vision of a lasting settlement between Muslims and Hindus and could take a realistic and far-sighted view of major political problems. He was fully conscious of the fact that in Hyderabad the Hindus were in a very large majority and that ultimately they should have their full share in the administration of the country. His objective was to delay drastic political changes only till such time as the Muslims came on par with the Hindus in economic and other walks of life. He firmly believed that until the Muslims had earned a rightful place in that respect they should hold on to the political power as otherwise the Hindus were certain to turn the Muslims into economic serfs. He firmly believed that the Hindus would never concede a place of dignity to any community other than their own once they assumed political power. He also knew that the proportion of the Muslims in Hyderabad despite their seven hundred years of rule was very small; and believed that for Muslims to be able to lead a secure and honourable life it was essential that they should have a larger number than at present in order to constitute an effective minority. He was equally alive to the necessity of immediately overhauling the administrative machinery of the State and of raising its efficiency and the need of providing equal opportunities for all. He was anxious to have political reforms early in the State but until the Muslims had a more secure position, he was insistent on parity in the Legislature between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. He did not like the autocratic though often benevolent rule of the Nizam and thought that despite certain advantages the system had many disadvantages. He, therefore, wanted to see a more democratic form of government introduced in Hyderabad as early as possible. The Hindus agreed with most of his views but could not agree to parity in Legislature between the Muslims and non-Muslims. Such parity was *prima facie* an illogical proposition from their point of view and they could not compromise with him on that issue. Perhaps it was to justify his stand on parity that he developed the theory that the sovereignty of Hyderabad did not lay in the hands of the Muslim Ruler alone but rested with the entire Muslim community. He remained firm in that view till he

breathed his last. Had he lived longer, it is certain that he would not have swerved from it until such time as the Muslims were economically equal to the Hindus and had built up a secure position for themselves as a minority.

It was not an easy matter for anyone to step into his shoes under these conditions. The obvious choice would have been Abul Hasan but quite a few Muslims had become suspicious of him owing to his wavering disposition in the past. He was challenged by Fazle Hussain, a lesser known Advocate from Warangal, who, it was said, had been at one time referred to by Bahadur Yar Jung in a speech as his possible successor. All attempts at a compromise having failed, finally and formally, the tie came openly between these candidates for the leadership of the Muslim community. Abul Hasan was confident of an easy victory in the Majlis-e-Shora, the Parliament, as it might be called, of the Ittehad which was the competent body to choose the leader. His opponents were equally keen on getting Fazle Hussain in. Feelings ran high among the supporters of each candidate. There was the danger that an open election might lead to a rift in the Muslim ranks. As a last resort, I was approached by a number of prominent Muslims to persuade either one or the other candidate to withdraw. Both sides feared the consequences that might follow an open election so soon after the death of Bahadur Yar Jung. I tried to persuade each one of the two candidates to withdraw in favour of the other but both sides remained adamant. On the night previous to the election I had very lengthy discussions with both the candidates and their respective supporters but failed to arrive at a solution acceptable to both sides. Abul Hasan was confident that the voting would go ninety percent in his favour, and went on to state that he would not take up the office unless he had overwhelming support in his favour. I took up this point and proposed that in case Abul Hasan secured less than two thirds of the votes he should voluntarily retire in favour of Fazle Hussain immediately after the results of the election were announced. Abul Hasan thought that was a fair enough proposition from his point of view and agreed to it. It was already three in the morning, and I was not prepared to risk any further changes. I had the formula typed on a paper and Abul Hasan set his signature down in token

of his acceptance, bade good-bye and left the room. The other side still remained hesitant and would not accept even this generous offer. In the forenoon of the election day, I once again persuaded Fazle Hussain to accept my proposal, and sign the paper the same way as Abul Hasan had done. He remained undecided. The voting hour was drawing near and finally I gave up my attempts to bring about an agreed solution of the tangle and left Fazle Hussain. It is, however, noteworthy that Abul Hasan did not know that the proposal had not been accepted by the other party and that Fazle Hussain had not signed the paper.

At the house of a friend of mine that evening, I learned that Abul Hasan had only secured 65 per cent of the votes and his opponent the rest. "Hard luck for poor Fazle Husain", I shouted, "had he accepted and signed the paper he would have got in now". Nevertheless I still held the paper signed by Abul Hasan and was certain that he would not take any further action without ascertaining from me the position. We turned on the radio and to my great surprise I heard that Abul Hasan had not only accepted the verdict of the voters in his favour unconditionally but had also declared his Cabinet. Good job, I thought, that his opponent had not signed the paper; otherwise poor Abul Hasan would have been in a sorry mess. I said no more about it to anyone.

Abul Hasan, however, could not hold on to this newly acquired honour for long. Every action of his was being viewed with suspicion and the distrust of the Muslims in him was growing very fast. He finally had to quit his office under severe pressure of public opinion. Without a contest this time the Muslims elected Mazhar Ali Kamil. Mazhar Ali Kamil was a thorough gentleman, and no one had the least doubt in his honesty of purpose and action, but he soon proved to be too placid and soft for the post he was holding. Perhaps it was only his reputation of selflessness that kept him going for the duration of his office. The traditional hold that the Presidents of the Ittehad used to exercise on the rank and file of the Muslims was fast waning. He was indeed much too good-natured for the job he was holding. The result was that some of the fiery and boisterous elements began to bid for the power. Finally, there were three people left in the field to

contest—Rais, Razvi, and Anees. Quite a few of us thought that it would be disastrous if either of the first two came in. Of the three, Aneesuddin Ahmed appeared more balanced. So, an appeal was issued, in the name of a few leading Muslims, to the voters to exercise care in their selection in view of the critical times through which we were passing and vote for a more sober candidate. Among the signatories of the appeal was also included my name. The appeal was severely criticised particularly by the Rais group who had the popular daily paper "Waqt" at their command—in fact, the paper was owned and run by Rais himself. I had known Rais very little but had never felt much impressed by him. I did not know Qasim Razvi at all, but had heard that he was a highly emotional person. Many of us, outside the "Ittehad" ranks, felt that at such a crucial moment, more than anything else, the Muslims needed cool and far-sighted leadership. From what we had heard, Qasim Razvi did not appear to be the right man for the times. The appeal, however, did not help Aneesuddin Ahmed very much. In the election, Qasim Razvi scored very high. The second was nowhere near him and Aneesuddin stood very low at the bottom. I felt disappointed and was apprehensive of the consequences. There was nothing more that could be done—the members of the "Shora" were representatives of the Muslims of Hyderabad and they had voted in favour of Qasim Razvi.

Some time after the election, a friend of mine approached me and suggested that now that Qasim Razvi had been elected, he should have the opportunity of meeting all shades of opinion and should not be made to feel that he was boycotted by any section. I agreed with him. A few days later the same gentleman telephoned to me that Qasim Razvi wanted to meet me and one morning brought him over to me for breakfast. We had a very cordial conversation over a cup of coffee and discussed the topics of the day. We were still talking in formal tones when Qasim Razvi suddenly rose up on his feet and stretching his hand to my face, said, "Laik Ali Saheb, people have told you and your friends that I am a wily person", he paused for a few seconds, stared into my eyes and added, "well, experience will prove that I am not". He said these words in a most dramatic fashion and then sat down. I was completely taken aback and felt very em-

barrassed. A little later the meeting ended and I did not see anything of Qasim Razvi for a long time thereafter. Our subsequent meetings were mostly in social functions and I had no occasion of any long conversations with him.

I was mostly abroad during the period that followed Qasim Razvi's election as President of the "Ittehad". During the short intervals in which I was in Hyderabad I found that there were rival parties among the Muslims and that there were differences in the rank and file of the party. Qasim Razvi's principal opponents were from the Rais group who always painted him as too docile and not aggressive enough. There was also the Aneesuddin party who on the other hand thought his policy was dangerously aggressive and in any case not to their liking. One day I advised the Anees party to sit across the table with Razvi and talk over the matters and sink their differences so as to enable the "Ittehad" to render more useful and constructive service to their community. The active members of the Anees party were Masdusi and Kaleemuddin Ansari. After many unsuccessful parleys, one day they decided that they would go with Qasim Razvi to see Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and have their differences resolved. I arranged the meeting and they all met him one morning but their differences were not resolved. There were too many petty jealousies operating. Qasim Razvi remained surrounded by the more aggressive elements. Quite often they dragged him into situations which were not to his own liking. He, in order to maintain the balance of power and his personal position, frequently submitted to their dictates which were invariably more aggressive than his own.

CHAPTER VI

SIR AKBAR HYDARI AND HIS EXIT

THE BRITISH were having none too easy a time with India during their life and death struggle of the second World War. Anything was likely to happen after Dunkirk and the subsequent reverses in the Far East against Japan made their position extremely shaky. Each one of these reverses had brought home added joy to the Indian Congress circles. But for the unparalleled regard for 'money' in any form that an average Hindu mind has inherited from times immemorial, the British would have had to quit India much earlier. However, with their traditional shrewdness they took the fullest advantage of this weakness of the Hindu mind and bought all the services they needed and kept hold on the country, at least for the time being, chiefly by rapid expansion of currency notes circulation. Nevertheless, their position remained very uncertain. Most conspicuous among the few friends that they could still rely upon was the Nizam and the people of Hyderabad, despite the insults and humiliation and material damage that had been inflicted upon them from time to time by the British Crown Representative and his more indiscreet nominees. They also had at the time in Sir Akbar Hydari, at the head of the administration of the State as Prime Minister, a tried and trusted friend.

From a young man Akbar Hydari had grown old mostly in the administrative services of Hyderabad, and after holding the portfolio of Finance for over a decade, had at last attained the highest position after years of trying and waiting. The earlier part of his regime was by no means a bed of roses. As a result of the 1935 Act, new forces had been let loose. Congress had come into power in all the three adjoining provinces—Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces. C. Rajagopalchariya at the head of the Ministry in Madras with his colleagues was devotedly engaged in making the administration of his province a model for the rest of India and maintained very cordial relations with Hyderabad. The Government of the Central Provinces

was too involved in its local affairs; but the ministers of the Bombay Government found the existence of a non-Congress Hyderabad as their neighbour unbearable. The resources and the energies of the Bombay Province were therefore fully mobilised to start a mass civil disobedience movement in the State. Both Morarji Desai and K.M. Munshi who held important portfolios in the Government of Bombay, personally took charge of directing the campaign. The services were employed of the veteran and seasoned men of the Mass Civil Disobedience Movement of India which had been so successfully conducted to dislodge the British Rule. Batches of volunteers started entering the State through the hundreds of miles long western borders to preach mass civil disobedience to the local populace and to exhort them to rise up to win freedom. Their methods were simple—anything from blocking the traffic by squating across the public roads to burning or looting of the public buildings. Most of the unwelcome visitors were driven back across the border—some were arrested and placed under detention. Some local political organizations including the State Congress, the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha joined hands with them. At first it was feared that the movement might assume unwieldy proportions and this gave some anxious moments to the administration. But, after the arrest of four or five thousand volunteers, it petered out. Despite every effort on the part of Morarji Desai and Munshi and Tirth, the response of the masses was very meagre. The slogans which had at first attracted the curiosity of the local populace soon came to be ridiculed by everyone owing to their very absurdity and too obvious false-hoods. Before long the movement started fading away and its sponsors thought it fit to formally call it off on the plea that their suspicions had been allayed by the clarifications made in a certain Government communique and the announced intention of introducing Constitutional Reforms.

The introduction of the Constitutional Reforms turned out to be the most thorny problem in the career of Akbar Hydari. He had earned a certain amount of unpopularity over the question of the Federation of India that had been taken up by the British before the World War II. The Nizam and the people of Hyderabad both Hindus and Muslims, had been very apprehensive of the outcome of

the talks of the Federation, and Bahadur Yar Jung as the spokesman of the Muslims had made Akbar Hydari the principal target of his attacks from the public platform. Owing to disagreement between the federation elements and later with the signs of World War appearing on the horizon, the main issue had been shelved but the lack of faith in Akbar Hydari remained. His proposals of Reforms were vehemently opposed both by the Hindus and Muslims—only from opposite angles. Between the two communities, it was a race for political power and he had to hold the delicate balance with the Nizam sitting at the other end suspiciously watching the developments. Feelings were running high and a good deal of open and secret manoeuvring was being done by all the political parties. Luckily for Akbar Hydari the World War II came to his rescue and he confidently and firmly shelved the issue for the time being, on the plea of concentrating all energies on war efforts. The excuse was laudable; many safety ordinances had been issued on the lines of British India which could be effectively used if necessary. The All India Congress had itself gone into wilderness and the Congress ministries in the various provinces had all come to be dissolved. In the absence of action from other political parties the reaction of the Ittehad had also tempered down and for the time being at least all seemed to go well with Sir Akbar's regime.

The British had a true friend in Akbar Hydari and during the critical days of war listened to most of his suggestions, and he in turn did all that they wanted him to do. Hyderabad as such, had become an extensive and important supply base of men and materials of the British and subsequently of the Allied forces and provided one spot at least where sabotage or foul play was least feared. All payments were received in British Indian currency notes and against that backing Hyderabad currency notes circulation was rapidly expanding. Akbar Hydari did all that was humanly possible to maintain the formidable war efforts as well as political equilibrium within and perhaps it was the happiest and most glorious period of his life. Only one factor went against him—his success within the State and popularity with the British was becoming increasingly unbearable to the Nizam. Akbar Hydari was conscious of this fact; but there were sufficient forces in

his favour at the moment not to cause him any serious alarm. He, however, overlooked the fact that the Nizam had his own ways and means of influencing public opinion within the State and feelings outside.

Akbar Hydari had always regarded the Osmania University of Hyderabad as the realisation of his dreams and the best fruit of his efforts. Unlike all other universities throughout the undivided India where medium of education was English, Osmania University stood alone proudly on a different pedestal as the only institution where knowledge was imparted in the vernacular language 'Urdu' and at a standard no way below its sister institutions. A large number of books in every branch of learning had been translated from English and other languages and an expensive Bureau of Translation was expanding that stock daily. His contributions to the agricultural, industrial and economic development of the State were also considerable. He had stabilised the public finances of the State at an enviable level. Most of his other efforts were crowned with success. In only one respect he was unfortunate—despite all his good works, his personal popularity with the rank and file in the State never stood high.

Boys will always be boys and one day they decided to prove it once over. On some relatively minor issue, the University students got inflamed and thousands of them marched from the University to the Prime Minister's residence. They soon surrounded the house and finally broke into. They destroyed some pieces of furniture and household articles that they could lay their hands on but no one of the inmates was assaulted in person. The Police Chief arrived on the spot, but in his attempt to force the students out, got himself injured. A little later, the excitement died down and they all swiftly returned to their abodes. The whole episode was over in an hour or so but it left many thinking what might have happened and how much could have been done.

The Nizam finally succeeded in persuading the British Crown representative to find some dignified way of getting Akbar Hydari out of Hyderabad so his services were solicited by the Government of India for the portfolio of information and even before Akbar Hydari knew anything about it, the Nizam had communicated his consent to

Delhi. Of course, he need not have accepted the proposition but he thought it wise to do so and one fine morning left Hyderabad for good. It happened in 1941 when the shape of World War II was at its worst.

On the recommendations of the British Crown representative at Delhi, the Nizam appointed the Nawab of Chhatari as successor to Akbar Hydari. Under the British bureaucracy the Nawab had given ample proof of his balanced judgement, shrewdness and loyalty. After assuming charge in Hyderabad, he made no radical changes in the administration, kept the closest contact with the British Resident (political agent in Hyderabad) and carefully and skilfully kept at a good distance the thorny problems of Constitutional Reforms. Uneventful pages of the calendar rolled on one after another—even the most vehement political organizations were feeling frustrated. Suddenly and unexpectedly Bahadur Yar Jung had died and the Ittehad had passed into weaker hands and internal feuds and jealousies were rampant in the organization. The State Congress, in line with its parent organization, the All-India Congress, was still in the wilderness. The machinery of war efforts set in motion by his predecessor was ticking over as a routine. Miscalculated and unrestricted export of food grains had turned the State from a surplus into a deficit area and once the deficiency came to be realized, hoarding and blackmarketing made matters doubly worse. However, these problems did not cause Chhatari undue concern and were dealt with in the normal bureaucratic fashion.

Human emotions are a peculiar phenomenon and if they are not entangled in serious problems and if they are not canalised to face major issues, can always create a host of Frankensteins and display themselves in combating them. Some such display took place in the regime of Chhatari. A small mosque in a certain Mission Hospital area in a remote part of the State was raised to the ground very indiscreetly by those in charge of the local administration. Any disrespect or disregard of a place of worship is always seriously viewed in the Orient by the masses and every administration is alive to this fact and carefully and in time avoids it. Under a British minister in charge of law and order this particular incident was lightly treated.

Despite repeated public representations to Chhatari, he preferred not to take any direct or effective action in the matter and left it to the authorities concerned who in turn allowed it to drift till it began to assume serious proportions. Chhatari sensed the danger, yet he did not like to displease his concerned colleague in the Cabinet, a Britisher, by passing definite orders to set matters right. As usual, he kept himself within the limits of gently persuading the minister in charge to act and to do the right thing. On this occasion his usual gentle methods proved slow and ineffective and one day a large public meeting was held to demonstrate against the inaction of the Government. The gathering was stimulated by several unrestrained and fiery speakers and at the end of the meeting, the mob followed the leaders and marched on to Shah Manzil—the official residence of the Prime Minister. Having reached the destination they found the gates of Shah Manzil open and the guards too few to effectively stop them. Precisely that very moment Chhatari had concluded a Cabinet meeting in which the decision had been taken to set right the wrong done. Time factor, however, went against him and before the decision could be conveyed to the excited visitors, parts of Shah Manzil were already smoking and in flames. A few brave officers came to the rescue of Chhatari and his family and of his British and other colleagues and rescued them all out from the building and across the surrounding wall in the rear of the house to safety. Before anything more could be done, the articles in the building that could not withstand fire had turned into ashes and presented a ghastly sight. The mob then moved to the residence of his British colleague, Minister in charge of Law and Order, and treated it the same way. Having consumed their wrath in the smoke and flames of the two notable residences, they all went home and later only the leaders who were perhaps not directly responsible for the arson at the moment came to be arrested.

The incident had no parallel in the administrative history of Hyderabad—never before had the Government been so lethargic and inactive—never before had the prestige of the Government received such a serious blow. From the point of view of material damage, the matter was not so serious; but on the future political developments, it had a very significant bearing. Chhatari could not survive the

shock. He was asked by the Nizam to resign and he left. The British Crown representative insisted that the British Minister in-charge of Law and Order should continue to remain in his office and so he remained.

CHAPTER VII

SIR MIRZA ISMAIL ENTERS THE TURMOIL

At the time when fundamental issues of far reaching consequences were being discussed between the leaders of the Indian Congress, the Muslim League and the top level representatives of the British at Delhi, Sir Mirza Ismail was at the head of affairs in Hyderabad. Mirza's dislike for the league was no secret and he disliked everything that the League represented. He could not forget that Jinnah was opposed to his appointment as Prime Minister of Hyderabad and that he had even released to the press a letter Mirza had written to him expressing his inability to serve the cause of the Muslims in reply to his invitation. The reasons for his inability, advanced by Mirza in the letter were far from lofty and were based on purely personal considerations. The publication of the letter greatly undermined Mirza's prestige in the eyes of the public on the eve of his prospective appointment as Prime Minister of Hyderabad—a matter which Mirza could never forgive. Against all good counsel, the Nizam remained unusually stubborn and finally appointed him as Prime-Minister, a post which he had coveted all his life. However, soon after the appointment, the Nizam got disappointed in him and began to make no secret of his displeasure. Under these circumstances, it was thought that he would soon tender his resignation, but Mirza proved to be tough. Once having taken charge as Prime Minister of Hyderabad, he was not prepared to be shunted out so easily. So, for a while, there went on quite a tug of war between him and the Nizam. The Ittehad were not blind to the situation. The appointment of Mirza had never been to their liking and out of sheer respect to the personal wishes of the Nizam they had not staged violent demonstrations at the time of his arrival. Their bitter feelings had only remained suppressed owing to their traditional loyalty to the Ruler. A section of them even felt that now that he had come into office why should he not be given a fair chance. Mirza had also, soon after his arrival, appealed to the public not to judge him by his past but to give him a trial and wait

and see what he does.

Mirza, however, did nothing more than the appeal to win over the people and some of his actions, perhaps not deliberate, started antagonizing them. He never appeared disposed towards taking anything seriously and spent most of his time on minor city improvement schemes—pulling down high compound walls, improving road curves, illuminating public parks and so on. He was comparatively new to the country and was expected to make a serious study of its problems and find proper solutions and judiciously and methodically implement them. But, he always exhibited a disposition that by virtue of his long experience he knew and understood every thing and was going to set it all right by a kind of magic wand. He would take any serious suggestions lightly and often, perhaps to show off his vanity, do just the opposite. Once, privately it was conveyed to me by certain responsible and highly placed persons that there were large stocks of war materials and ammunitions at Bolarum (British Garrison's Head Quarter near the City of Hyderabad) and the authorities in charge would be glad to make the whole lot over to the Nizam's Government for a sum of thirty or forty millions rupees although its valuation was five or six times as much. I at once carried this proposal to Mirza and urged upon him in every possible manner to acquire the entire stocks. He refused on the grounds that it would only amount to waste of good money as Hyderabad had no plans to fight war and the normal Army and Police requisitions he could any way get executed from Delhi by his personal influence. He also had the unfortunate habit of unreservedly committing himself to everything before the public and rarely said "no" on such occasions. The administration and the public, however, soon began to realize that his "yes" meant very little or nothing at all. The Hindu political parties, who at first had hailed his appointment and were particularly pleased by some of his unanticipated promises in the early stages, began to get disillusioned. He had given them assurances of immediate redress of all their genuine and otherwise grievances but there was no sign of anything coming out of those assurances. In practice he appeared to them acting very differently. At times he passed vague and indefinite orders but they were apparently not intended to be carried out. On

the other hand, some of his hasty pronouncements had greatly antagonized the Muslims who did not seem to receive the satisfaction even of a few sweet words from him. The general tempo, therefore, all round, was rising against Mirza and he began to feel unnerved. At times he even felt concerned over his personal safety. He repeatedly called the police chief and asked him to make sure that all was well at his residence and that there was no possibility of any undesirables getting access to his living rooms.

In the midst of his minor occupations, he started talks with the various political parties on the proposed scheme of Reforms of the Constitution of the country. Moin Nawaz Jung held the charge of the *ad hoc* portfolio that had been created for the purpose of drawing up the new Constitution and of implementing it. He had a tough job to perform in getting round the various and divergent shades of public opinion to meet on a common ground and was frequently handicapped in his attempts by the loose promises that Sir Mirza would unreservedly extend to one or the other political organization which he himself probably never intended to implement. Likewise, not infrequently, he would obstruct or delay matters of importance to an extent that they lost all their usefulness and caused adverse reactions. He was greatly annoyed by the State Congress leaders for not keeping to their word and for disregarding his advice to them. He had of course taken it for granted that he was accepted by them as their God-father and had therefore the privilege to regard them as his proteges. Accordingly, he ticked them off on a few occasions and that made him awfully unpopular with the State Congress also and certain sections of the Hindu community. He felt also annoyed with the All-India Congress that despite his open allegiance to them that body would not stand by him. Before long, he began to realize that he was losing ground on all the fronts. He was neither commanding the support of the Muslims nor of the Hindu political parties. The Ruler, of course, had already lost confidence in him.

Despite the boycott of the State Congress, the Constitutional Reforms were introduced and elections for the Legislative Assembly were held under the new Constitution. It cannot be said that these moves were altogether unsuccessful. It is true that had the Congress

contested the elections they would have captured a substantial number of Hindu seats; but, even without them the polling was large and the elections were well contested. The new Assembly finally met. The Muslim seats were one and all captured by the "Ittehad". Those who stood against the "Ittehad", in every case forfeited their deposits. The "Ittehad", thus, firmly planted in the Legislature almost by the unanimous verdict of the Muslims, started showing off its strength. Qasim Razvi was of course, the leader of the party in the Assembly. Even before the house met, he was dictating his terms. First, he refused to appear in the "House" at all with his party unless certain Constitutional issues were clarified to his satisfaction. The new Constitution had provided that at least two Cabinet-Ministers would be taken from the major political parties in the "House". Mirza asked him to give a panel of names from his party out of which he may make a choice. It was intended to take one Minister each from the Muslim and Hindu communities into the Cabinet. Qasim Razvi refused to give more than one name. Mirza tricked Qasim Razvi by asking him for two names as he said it was intended to appoint two public members from each community. So he got two names from him but ended by taking only one of them—the first one. The matter, however, was not pursued further by the "Ittehad" although Qasim Razvi appeared considerably annoyed over this trickery.

The Nizam was quietly and disapprovingly watching all that was going on. He still felt too proud to admit openly that he had made a mistake in the appointment of Mirza but was steadily getting exasperated. The Nizam had hoped that Mirza would at least earn the loyalty and support of the Hindu community and more particularly the Congress group but in that matter also he had completely failed. There had been hardly anything done to improve the political situation inside the country. There was nothing constructive or progressive done in any section of the administration and the Nizam had begun to feel sick at the very sight of the dismantled and dwarfed compound walls all over the city and the pale yellow colour (Mirza's choice) that was creeping over the many traditionally white houses in the city. Mirza felt that he could not be indifferent for long to the public opinion that was rapidly hardening and the displeasure that the Nizam had

openly started showing towards him. He, therefore, decided that he should do something spectacular to regain the confidence of the public and to revive the interest of the Nizam in himself.

It had been the life-long ambition of the Nizam to get back the province of Berar from the Government of India which had been sliced off from his territory in the days of his father by the British Crown Representative, Lord Curzon, by one of the meanest show of power and threats. The Nizam's previous attempts through other Prime Ministers had only resulted in the declaration that the sovereignty of the Nizam over Berar was formally acknowledged, that his flag would be hoisted over Berar about once a year and that he could appoint an Agent General to stay at Nagpur, the seat of Government of the Central Provinces of which Berar now formed a part, to keep an eye on the affairs of that region. Otherwise the Province of Berar remained, as it was, an integral part of British India. Mirza, whose position had been shaken in many respects, now decided to take a leap in the dark and came forward before the Nizam with proposals to get Berar back. He told the Nizam that he was going to make use of his personal influence with the Congress leaders in India and the local Hindus of Berar to get the province back. He appeared perfectly confident of his success and planned to visit Berar. He was duly and seriously advised by the Agent General at Nagpur that any such attempt would be futile and there was little chance for the Berar Hindus to accept his invitation to visit Hyderabad and see things for themselves and possibly have further talks with him over reunion. With the same unjustified confidence he also sent a despatch to the Nizam that he had scored a great success and had arranged to get all the local leaders to visit Hyderabad to place their allegiance at the feet of the Nizam. He himself then proceeded to Delhi with the intention of returning back to Hyderabad in time to meet the Berar leaders. However, by the time he returned to Hyderabad the leaders who, out of courtesy had accepted his invitation only to pay a visit to Hyderabad, had received warning from the High Command of the Indian Congress and accordingly sent an apology to him for their inability to keep to their promise. The game was over. He saw that there was no place for him any longer in Hyderabad, went on a

short leave to his home town—Bangalore—never again to return.

The Nizam was once again on the lookout for someone else as Pime Minister. The British hold, although it was ending in India, was yet showing no sign of waning in Hyderabad. The Resident once again got busy discussing with the Nizam the matter of the choice of the next Prime Minister. The Nizam still felt that it was the privilege of the Resident to counsel him on the choice and that the Crown Representative's approval was still needed on the appointment of the Prime Minister. Finally, it was at the initiative of the British Resident that for a second time the Nawab of Chhatari was approached to fill up the post. The Nawab had had a feeling that his exit from Hyderabad on the previous occasion had not been all too graceful and that if there were an opportunity to regain his lost reputation, he should not miss it. And, of course, the premiership of Hyderabad was not a matter that could easily be set aside by anybody. So, he was in Hyderabad for a second time. Unfortunately, this time affairs in Hyderabad were far more complicated than ever before. The issue of accession to India was on the anvil. Feelings were hardening all over the State, more particularly among the Muslims to keep Hyderabad out of accession to India at any price. The spirit of "do or die" was getting stronger and border raids into the State from the surrounding Indian territory were increasing and a sense of insecurity was beginning to be felt. The realization was growing, particularly among the Muslims, that they may soon have to defend their homes and hearths and their lives and honour. Besides, after the decision of the British to quit, the glowing vision of long cherished independence was bcoming brighter before the eyes of everyone.

Chhatari, soon after his arrival in Hyderabad earnestly applied himself to the task of solving the most difficult issue facing everyone—the future relationship between free India and Hyderabad. He called Sir Walter Monckton to Hyderabad as it was hoped that the personal friendship between the latter and Lord Mountbatten, who was the Governor-General of India, would be of great assistance in carrying out informal discussions and private exchange of views. The Nizam, as usual, attached a great deal of importance to Lord Mountbatten, and still regarded him as his potent saviour. He could not reconcile

himself to the fact that even if he were to succeed in enlisting genuine sympathies of Mountbatten, major decisions on behalf of free India no longer rested with him. Both Chhatari and Monckton had failed to clearly bring home the fact to the Nizam that the time had now come to take major decisions and the people he was really faced with were Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel and not Mountbatten. He had also failed to fully appreciate that the only object of Indian Congress in agreeing to continue Mountbatten as the first Governor-General of Free India was to make use of him for roping in and properly subjugating the ruling Princes of India. They knew that most rulers of the Indian States had still retained their respect for the British Crown Representative and Governor-General and their past fear of him. Also, Mountbatten was capable of doing every thing to please the Congress leaders and would do anything to meet their wishes and to carry out their plans. So, while the presence of Mountbatten had in the beginning some mental solace for the Nizam, the material losses suffered by him in course of time at his hands gave him continuous shocks.

It cannot be said definitely that the Nizam had been kept correctly and fully apprised by his advisers of the rapid developments that were taking place at Delhi. In most cases, he remained ill-informed and ill-advised. Chhatari, in the earlier stages tried to take bold steps in favour of Hyderabad but soon received mild but firm warning from the authorities of his home Province of U.P. (India) that such a course might cost him his Estate and other assets which were all in that Province. On one occasion the Premier of U.P. had said in a public speech that for those of the U.P. Zamindars who were sitting in other States and acting against the interest of the Indian Union the gates of the U.P. prisons had been kept wide open. All these threats were, of course, openly directed against the Nawab of Chhatari and he as Premier of Hyderabad could not have had an easy feeling. Under these conditions, he plodded along as best as he could. Accompanied by Walter Monckton and Ali Yavar Jung, the Minister in charge of Constitutional Affairs, he paid a number of visits to Delhi arousing each time more and more suspicions in the minds of the leaders of the Indian Union on one side and both the Muslims and Hindus of Hyder-

abad on the other. Chhatari by himself, was certainly not disliked by the Muslims but his close association with Ali Yavar Jung was viewed with great suspicion. This was singularly unfortunate. Even the association of the "Ittehad" nominated Minister and the public Hindu Minister did not help Chhatari very much in clearing up his own position and the suspicion of the public continued to grow strong against all the three—Chhatari, Ali Yavar Jung and Walter Monckton.

Sir Walter Monckton, a British King's Counsel, was first engaged by Akbar Hydari to advise the Hyderabad Delegation in the pre-war Round Table Conference in London on the issues concerning the Indian Federation and the claims of the Nizam over Berar. As already stated, his principal role in the 1947-48 Indo-Hyderabad talks was to serve as a private and informal link between the Nizam and Mountbatten and to help the Government of Hyderabad mostly in matters of drafting of letters and memoranda. By years of association he had developed a personal attachment to the Nizam and a liking for Hyderabad. In Hyderabad had matured his years-old romance and it was there that he was married—the Nizam himself had given away the bride. The State had made all the arrangements of a most sumptuous honeymoon and had taken care that the couple carried away a lasting memory of their nuptial and thereafter in some of the Arabian Night's settings. There were enough reasons, therefore, for his sentimental attachments. He had of course been very handsomely paid in the past and some say his earnings from Hyderabad formed the main part of his fortune. Nevertheless, in the later years his professional earnings no longer appeared his primary consideration and he seemed genuinely anxious to help the cause in whatever manner he could. It, therefore, hurt him that his name should be dragged in the whirlpool of local politics along with that of Chhatari and Ali Yavar Jung. One day when things had become hot for Chhatari, owing to great uneasiness in the public, particularly the Muslims, and Monckton had threatened to return home and leave him to deal with the affairs as best as he could, he asked me to help him out of the difficult situation. During that period most of the time I had been abroad and was not very much associated with the political developments. The Ittehadis had released a statement to the Press where-

in they had unreservedly condemned the policy of the Government and expressed their lack of faith in Walter Monckton. At the insistence of Chhatari, I attempted to pursuade the Ittehadis to rescind their pronouncements but did not succeed. The next best thing I could do was to bring Razvi and Monckton together and give them both a chance to understand each other's viewpoint. My impression was that much of the trouble between them was due to quite an unnecessary heavy curtain that had been hung between them particularly at the instance of the Minister in charge of the Constitutional Affairs. The mysterious shroud of secrecy that used to envelope the most simple affairs of the Government and which indeed on the other hand were the common knowledge of almost everyone was the root cause of the annoyance of the Ittehadis and of a great deal of trouble between them and Walter Monckton. At last, despite the disapproval of the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, the Ittehad leader did meet and had a heart to heart talk with Monckton. This apparently helped matters to some extent and things seemed more peaceful for a while. Both sides felt that had the Constitutional Affairs Department taken the various leaders of the public opinion a little more into confidence things might have gone on very differently. The general belief was that even some of the members themselves of the Delegation that was negotiating terms with India were not informed of all that was going on behind the scene and that feeling was giving rise to a great deal of suspicion, frustration and annoyance.

The improvement in the general atmosphere which was noticed as a result of the meetings between Qasim Razvi and Walter Monckton did not endure. Undue secrecy again began to shroud the events and arouse deeper suspicions. Under the surface, a major political storm was gathering. On the surface, Chhatari went about trying to please everyone but satisfied none. Qasim Razvi and his colleagues once again began to feel that all was not well with the plans and intentions of those carrying on the negotiations with India and they let loose their tongues against the Government as a whole. From now on they did not spare the Ruler either whose personal position and prestige they had so far greatly respected. By this time, also, the raids originating from the Indian Union were penetrating deeper and deeper

into the State all along the two thousand miles of the border and were growing in intensity and frequency. There were also instances of violent actions by the local anti-social elements who were receiving effective assistance and encouragement from Indian officials across the border and were roaming about under various communist banners. These elements took the fullest advantage of the weakness and indecisiveness of the Government machinery and were trying to rouse the people in certain parts of the State by popular communist slogans. In some instances they had succeeded in organizing small bands of armed raiders and more particularly in the eastern districts a number of villages were getting affected by their lawlessness. The police invariably appeared helpless in dealing with the situation. They had not enough weapons and were very short of ammunition. This weakness on the part of police, did not remain a secret for long. Each time that they faced the well armed raiders from across the border who were plentifully supplied by the Indian authorities with modern weapons and ample ammunition and the equally well equipped so-called communists inside, they had fared badly. As a result, the morale of the police forces rapidly sank and along with them of the law-abiding citizens. Usually the Muslim inhabitants of those areas offered active resistance to the raiders and the lawless elements and in turn were made their principal target. A large number of Muslims had been killed and their houses had been looted and burnt down. These events led to growing dissatisfaction all over against the Police and the Government. Whenever there was a serious incident, the police chiefs rushed to the Minister in charge and he in turn to the Prime Minister, but no one could produce the much needed weapons or ammunition. The indents of Hyderabad for the normal annual supplies of arms and ammunition on the Government of India were lying at the desk of the authorities in Delhi for a long time. The Congress leaders by their secret and underhand machinations had seen to it that no such material was supplied to Hyderabad, even long before they had assumed their formal and official role in the Government of India. The future lords of India had been quite clear in their intentions towards Hyderabad long before they had come into power and wanted to make their future path as smooth as possible. As in most of the other attempts

of the Chhatari Government there was no planned effort to procure arms and ammunition and only a half-hearted and clumsy attempt was made to import some from abroad. The attempts to import some arms from Europe and other regions ended in a fiasco and a major scandal. His approach to the problem, his choice of men to do the job, all appeared to go wrong. Not a barrel or a round of ammunition was obtained from anywhere; but the ungainly attempt gave the Government of India a useful handle for propaganda against Hyderabad. "The Nizam was preparing for war against India," they said and gave good publicity to it in and outside the country.

The Nizam usually a sensitive and observant person, did not appear very much perturbed by the wave of disturbances and lawlessness that was prevailing all along the borders and in other places inside the country. The main problem with him was to secure a settlement of the major political issues with India and that he believed was only possible through the good offices of the British Governor General, Lord Mountbatten. He still believed that he himself and his ancestors had been too good a friend of the British and that under no circumstances would the British let him down and risk their fair name. He had never met Mountbatten but cherished fullest confidence in his capacity and fair play: he being the cousin of the King of England. He could never reconcile himself to the fact that Mountbatten was now directly serving the cause of the Congress and was in no mood to be bothered about the fair name of the British or of the Royal family. The implicit faith of the Nizam, not infrequently, surprised and at times annoyed even the Nawab of Chhatari.

Unable to check the inspired and organized border raids by negotiations and understanding or by his poorly equipped police, Chhatari ordered out the regular Army to deal both with the border situation and the internal lawless elements in the eastern districts of the State. A good part of the Army had already been for some time performing the un-military and somewhat demoralizing task of watching the borders to prevent smuggling of food grains which had been briskly going on for some time. The black marketing of food grains, in the Indian territory all round had proved a very lucrative business to a large number of people and the normal Customs and

Police outposts had failed to check it. Thus, most of the armed forces of the Nizam came to be engaged on anti-smuggling duties and on prevention of border raids and maintenance of law and order. Whatever units that were left behind at the military centres were also ordered to be in readiness for similar duties. These arrangements seemed to go well for a while, but it soon came to light that even the army was handicapped by lack of ammunition. It was realised that it would not be long before the armed forces are reduced to the level of the unarmed police and no one knew what would happen then.

Owing to their more vigorous resistance to both the border raids and internal disturbances, the victims were largely Muslim citizens. Of course there were many Hindus and Christians that were meeting similar fate at the hands of the raiders and others. The Ittehad at first confined itself to bitter criticism of the Government over the state of affairs but soon realized that the Police and the army were really helpless both on account of insufficiency of numbers and lack of equipment. The only practical thing, the Ittehad thought, was to organise in large numbers local civil defence units, primarily of the Muslims, in the outlying areas and provide them with such weapons for self-defence as they could lay their hands on. Volunteers of the Ittehad organization started visiting every little village and hamlet to arouse the Muslim men and women to drill and to organize themselves to save their families from being butchered and their property and belongings from getting looted and destroyed. Most people were provided with and were taught and drilled in the use of long sticks mounted with crudely made steel or iron spears. Many were equipped with old fashioned swords which were available in large numbers throughout the country and only needed to be repaired and polished. Several others were able to lay their hands on old matchlocks and muzzle-loading guns which their ancestors had used. Each one improvised or put in shape whatever weapon he or she could get hold of. Thus, almost overnight an amazingly large number of civil defence units sprang up. Some were very small and consisted of no more than four or five persons—others were large and at times numbered a hundred and more. In places where the inhabitants were too few, they were advised to give up their homes and lands and move to larger centres.

Thousands of families followed the advice and moved to what they regarded in their own way safer spots. They left their homes, their cattle, their fields with standing crops and everything else that they could not carry on their own heads or backs, which only proved the sense of insecurity in which they had been living.

Qasim Razvi had in the beginning engaged a few volunteers called the "Razakars" mostly college students to go to the remote border areas and organise the people for self-defence as an experiment. But, from the very outset the activity surpassed all dimensions of any experiment. The movement spread throughout the country like wild-fire and went far beyond the wildest imagination of Qasim Razvi himself. There had been only a few "Razakars" who went out to organize the local citizens—the followers in turn began to style themselves Razakars as well and rapidly multiplied in numbers. Thus, almost overnight, grew up a sizeable Razakar organization which later came to be so widely publicized the world over. I shall further deal with the Razakars and their organization at greater length in some other chapter.

The thing that concerned the Nizam most at the time were neither the Razakars nor the border raids nor the local disturbances but the delay that was occurring in the settlement of the main political issues with India and next to that such portions of the speeches of Qasim Razvi and other Ittehad leaders which unfavourably referred to his own person. Chhatari, on the other hand, appeared to be alarmed over everything and moved about as if he had lost all confidence in himself. He was often absent-minded and engrossed in his own thoughts. There was no co-ordination in the working of the different departments of administration and he just did not seem inclined to take any decisions or to do anything whatsoever. With such disposition and amidst the local turmoil, the ding-dong negotiations with the Government of India proceeded and seemed to make very slow progress indeed. Mostly it was Monckton who was either going to or coming back from Delhi.

CHAPTER VIII

MIRZA'S EXIT AND CHHATARI'S RETURN

Walter Monckton finally came to the conclusion that in the atmosphere prevailing, any long-term agreement with the Government of India, except accession, would hardly be possible. The Government of India, who had many other problems on their hands at the moment must have also felt that, given time, they would be in a better position to deal with the Hyderabad issue more firmly and effectively. The suggestion thus came through Mountbatten for a Stand-still Agreement—that is to allow things to run as they were—for the time being, and both sides agreed that it may be a good thing to have some such arrangement at least for a year. The Government of India believed that in a year's time it would be possible to bring Hyderabad to her knees by indirect methods and so it may be able to avoid the necessity of any use of force on their part. The Nizam who was getting thoroughly tired of all that was going on, hoped that something not foreseen at the moment may happen during the year which might save him and the State. As such, both sides welcomed such an Agreement. A preliminary draft of the Stand-still Agreement was first prepared by Monckton in unofficial consultations with Mountbatten, but it was completely changed later by the Indian leaders at Delhi. Monckton tried hard to secure terms as favourable as possible to Hyderabad but of course he was struggling in vain. Mountbatten, having nicely fixed up all other States in the frame-work of accession was only keen to add in one more laurel to his record of services to India by concluding some arrangement with Hyderabad. As to what those arrangements would be was a secondary matter to him. He knew very well that some stop-gap arrangement only meant a short but useful period of waiting for his Delhi over-lords and he had no difficulty in convincing them on that point. His loyal efforts were appreciated by the powers at Delhi and after giving him the outline of the draft, they let him do the job and only kept a watchful eye over his activities lest in his over-enthusiasm he did something which might cause them inconvenience

in future. From the point of view of the Nizam, an agreement in any form if it achieved nothing else, would at least mean the postponement of the evil day. Chhatari felt pleased that after all some way out of the deadlock was in view and no matter how, if an agreement could only be concluded, he would be able to leave Hyderabad with some degree of satisfaction.

Things might have worked that way and at least the evil day deferred from the point of view of many had there not been the usual and unnecessary shroud of secrecy maintained about the whole affair. As it happened, at the time the president and several top leaders of the State Congress had been placed under arrest as it was felt that the State Congress was actively working under the directions of the leaders of India and instigating lawlessness and border raids. Other leading members of that organisation had left Hyderabad and taken comfortable refuge across the border, shouting a lot but doing very little. They were, however, supposed to be in close touch with the leaders of India and from the other side of the border they hailed the proposed Agreement. These gesticulations from outside the State roused serious suspicions in the minds of the political leaders—Hindus and Muslims alike, within the State. The Hindu leaders in the State, both in and outside the legislature, were greatly annoyed over the undue secrecy that was being maintained over the matter of their future fate. The Ittehad group felt certain that there was much more hidden beneath than what appeared on the surface. Everyone among them seriously doubted the genuineness of the principal actors in the drama. Their sole representative in the Cabinet who was a member of the delegation himself felt doubtful about the whole affair and frequently complained that he was not kept informed of all that was going on. Equally bitter was also his colleague from the Hindu community. Whether Chhatari's silence was deliberate with any object or he was simply led into that position, no one knew: that he was under the influence of the minister in charge of Constitutional Affairs more than his position as such warranted, everyone was certain.

The wave of feeling rising against Ali Yavar Jung, minister in-charge of Constitutional Affairs, and the obstructive policy adopted both by the Hindu and Muslim leaders apparently placed the Nizam

in a very difficult position. He, therefore, quietly decided to withdraw all the three members—Ali Yavar Jung, Rahim and Reddy from the delegation and placed Monckton, Ali Nawaz Jung and Sir Sultan Ahmad under Chhatari to substitute them. Sultan Ahmad did not belong to Hyderabad and only visited the State occasionally in his capacity of legal adviser to the Chamber of Princes. Thus, out of the four delegates from Hyderabad to negotiate and settle the future of the State, one was a Britisher and two others, Chhatari and Sultan Ahmad, residents of the Indian Union. Ali Nawaz Jung though a Hyderabad Muslim did not belong to any political party and there was none at all from the Hindu community. This move greatly infuriated both the Hindus and the Muslims throughout the State. The Ittehadis were already extremely suspicious of the entire proceedings and now to have their only representative thrown out of the delegation convinced them that there was something very ominous.

It was towards the end of October 1947 that the draft brought by Walter Monckton from Mountbatten was finally accepted by the Nizam despite being seriously objected to by several of his ministers. Between him and Chhatari it was decided that the newly constituted delegation should proceed to Delhi and convey to Mountbatten and the leaders of the Government of India the final consent of the Nizam. So, twenty-eighth October was fixed for the departure of the new delegation to Delhi. The Ittehadis were perplexed at the move and the ministers who had already expressed their disapproval of the draft, prepared their resignation letters as they did not want to share the responsibility of the resulting consequences. There was general excitement all over the city. The Ittehadis were much perturbed. There was only one night before them to act. The following morning, the Delegation would fly to Delhi and then the fate of Hyderabad would be sealed for ever, they thought. They of course, had a few active volunteers who were being trained for organizing the civil defence units along the borders. After it was past mid-night, someone among them suggested the idea of collecting a large mob to go and surround the houses of the delegates and make it physically impossible for them to move out. The decision was taken and within a few minutes thereafter the volunteers were knocking at every house

door in the city and telling the people what was expected of them to do. In most houses, the inhabitants were awake and gossiping and wondering what turn their fate was going to take the following morning. When they learnt that there was a chance for them to do something—if nothing more than laying themselves across the roads—they were glad of the opportunity. Men, women, young and old all conveyed to their neighbours and friends the plan of action that had to be executed before the daybreak. Within a couple of hours of the decision taken by the Ittehadis, thousands had already started marching towards the residences of the delegates which happened to be all in the same part of the city. By early hours of the morning tens of thousands of people had covered every inch of the roads around the houses of the delegates. By the break of the day, miles and miles of roads in the vicinity were simply covered with a seathing mass of humanity.

The decision of the Ittehadis to thus surround the houses had been taken well after midnight. The news went around like an electric spark and the public responded so swiftly as if everyone was all ready and just awaiting the word "go". The rapidity of the events, the unprecedented response of the public and the surging crowds marching towards the residence of the Prime Minister and the houses of other members of the Delegation completely stupified the rank and file of the police. It is doubtful if the best of the police could have effectively faced a situation like that and certainly the Hyderabad police was by no means the best. The Nizam was informed early in the morning of what had happened. He was both worried and annoyed. It was suggested to him on phone by Chhatari that there was no way out and it was no use the delegation trying to proceed under such circumstances. He thereupon passed orders to postpone the departure of the delegation. The decision of the Nizam was publicly announced and the crowd dispersed as swiftly, orderly and peacefully as they had gathered. The Ittehadis had scored a victory far beyond their own expectations. Qasim Razvi now realised fully what power he could wield if he could keep his hold over the masses. The Nizam also saw clearly that he could no longer have all his own way. He had to carry the people with him, which meant he had to take their popular leaders into confidence.

This was a fateful day for Hyderabad. This was the day when the Nizam realised fully that his was not after all the absolute authority and that he could only maintain his own position with the support of the people. He also knew that it was necessary for him to have the support both of the Hindus and Muslims if he was to survive as a monarch and that under no circumstances could he disregard the feelings of either. Like the British he also realised that the police and the army, though adequate enough to deal with normal situations, could not be relied upon in a crisis such as this. He was anxious of course to gain the support of his Hindu subjects but then the State Congress had always exhibited the most uncompromising and most disloyal attitude. True enough, that body only represented a very small section of the Hindu community, but then there was no organization of the Hindus as powerful as that. It was no secret that the State Congress had pledged its loyalty to the All-India Congress and was completely controlled and governed by it. The avowed intentions of the All India Congress against the Nizam were no secret either. The only alternative for him was to make sure of the fullest support of his Muslim subjects and that was perfectly natural, he being a Muslim himself. He knew that the Muslims even though they were in a minority were better organised and more politically conscious and most of them were closely knitted together on the general pattern of the Ittehad. They were not at the same time averse to the Hindus getting their due share of political power so long as the latter worked in the interest of the home land and not played to the tune of the All-India Congress.

It was only logical for the Nizam to form these impressions and act accordingly. Soon after the incident he called a meeting of the Council of Ministers and for the first time in his career presided over it himself. Everyone present was asked to express his views freely and frankly. Walter Monckton who was also invited to attend, was very outspoken in his criticism of the whole affair and made some sharp remarks on the police arrangements. He said it was the complacency on the part of the Police Chief that had allowed matters to go that far. The Ministers were divided in their opinion—some favoured the policy that had so far been pursued while others bitterly opposed it. There were no decisions taken but one thing was definitely obvi-

ous; there should be an immediate change of Government and greater responsibility should be placed with the more popular leaders of the public opinion.

When the Nizam gets an idea into his head he really gets going. After presiding over the Cabinet meetings he started sending for leaders of public opinion to gain their reactions, at first hand. It was then, perhaps for the first time, that he interviewed Qasim Razvi. Finally he decided to completely change the personnel of the Hyderabad Delegation that was negotiating the Stand-still Agreement with India. He now placed Moin Nawaz Jung at the head of the Delegation in place of Chhatari with Reddy and Rahim the two public Hindu and Muslim leaders as his associates. The change left no room for Walter Monckton and very quietly he decided to return to his less exciting chambers at the Temple in London.

The news of the change of Delegation came as an unpleasant surprise to Delhi. Both Nehru and Patel could see that the new delegation including two public leaders headed by one uncertain official was going to be more difficult to deal with. Disappearance of Monckton from the scene made Mountbatten feel very much lost. The Nizam himself was not certain if he had done the right thing and thought he should at least try and round off the sharp edges. So, he sent word to Mountbatten not to misjudge his action and to appreciate the difficult situation he had been placed in. Most unfortunately the messenger selected was no other than the infuriated Sultan Ahmed, a leading member of the Delegation that had been dissolved. Sultan Ahmed not only carried the message but also did all he could to make sure that the efforts of the new delegates did not succeed. The new Delegation visited Delhi. They found the weather cold and the reception meted out to them colder still. Mountbatten, the chief negotiator for India who could be as dramatic as he wished to, exhibited perfect indifference and acted short only of humiliation. The task of the unhappy delegates therefore to improve upon the already negotiated draft in any way, was well nigh impossible. It appeared almost a foolish attempt and sheer waste of time. It was indeed a pity to see the delegates trying to break their heads mostly at the secretariat level while Sultan Ahmed, moving about as the real mouthpiece of the Nizam, was busy con-



Signing of the Stand Still Agreement
29th November 1947
From left to right : P. V. Reddy, M. A. Rahim, Moin Nawaz Jung, Lord Mountbatten, V. P. Menon.

spiring at the higher levels. Obviously, from the point of view of Hyderabad, these events were extremely unfortunate. Mountbatten in one of his subsequent despatches to the Nizam stated that the history of Indo-Hyderabad relations might have been written by a different and a much happier pen had the delegation not been changed and the draft, as originally prepared, been concluded. That may be so, but this is certainly true that Hyderabad would have stood on a much stronger ground politically had there been no Stand-still Agreement at all. The net outcome of the efforts of the new delegation was that though there was practically no change in the original draft agreement, Delhi conceded a few changes in the collateral letters appended to the agreement which appeared to gain a small advantage in favour of Hyderabad—that, of course, if the agreement was at all intended to be honoured.

Soon after the change of delegation, Chhatari decided to leave Hyderabad and gave his failing health as the immediate reason for his decision to quit. The Nizam having for better or for worse disposed of, at least for the time being, the more immediate issue with the Government of India, got himself busy with the problem of forming a new Government.

CHAPTER IX

THE RAZAKARS

To no other thing could Qasim Razvi and the Razakar Organisation of Hyderabad be more indebted for placing them in the limelight than the extensive though negative publicity given to them by the Indian press. Almost daily for over a year, the most grotesque stories were being published of Razvi and the Razakars. The prefix RAZ of the two names had led to a common misunderstanding that Razvi had created the Razakar organization after his own name. The fact is that 'Razakar' simply means 'volunteer'. There had been razakars in the 'Ittehad' long before Razvi had ever appeared on the scene, and the volunteers of other organizations including those of the State Congress were also called razakars as no other appropriate expression exists in the Urdu language to convey the sense.

Qasim Razvi had been a practising lawyer in one of the western districts of Hyderabad State and head of the local branch of the 'Ittehad'. He had earned for himself the reputation of a selfless and zealous worker in the 'Ittehad' ranks. On one occasion he had offered his own and only residence to the 'Ittehad' and had actually pulled all his family and belongings out of it into the street. The offer, of course, was not accepted by Bahadur Yar Jung but the gesture brought Razvi widespread reputation. He had also organized his district branch of the 'Ittehad' in a perfect manner. Later, he was elected the President of the 'Ittehad' by an overwhelming majority. At the time when he came into that office the question of the 'Reforms' in the State was in the forefront. Over many issues concerning the reforms there were several tussles between him and Mirza Ismail who was then the Prime Minister. In these tussles it was invariably Qasim Razvi who scored the point. Not infrequently, he used to be over-powered by emotions in his public speeches and at times made statements that caused a great deal of embarassment to his friends and gave plenty of room for criticism to his foes. He used to feel sorry afterwards and make resolutions that he would be more careful in future; but once on a public

platform he was just the same again. Usually, in political demonstrations and public speeches in Hyderabad, a direct reference to the Nizam was avoided but at times Qasim Razvi did not even spare him. This naturally annoyed the Nizam a great deal, but invariably the grounds on which he levelled those attacks were so solid and well sustained that it was not easy to haul him up in any constitutional manner.

Just prior to the partition of India, raids into Hyderabad territory from across the borders began to grow in frequency and intensity and were carefully organized more particularly to damage the lives and property of the Muslims residing in the bordering areas. No one for long could remain a silent spectator of those events and much less could the 'Ittehad', the political party that claimed to look after the interests of the Muslims. Qasim Razvi at first made representations to the Government to make adequate arrangements to protect the lives and properties of his co-religionists but soon found that the position of the police and the army in the absence of sufficient supplies of arms and ammunitions was so hopeless that nothing effective could be expected of them. It was obvious that when the All-India Congress was engineering those raids, the Congress nominated Government of India, was not going to supply arms and ammunitions to Hyderabad to fight them. The hopes of the administration of Hyderabad based on their constitutional rights to get what they needed through India were openly declared by Qasim Razvi as sheer nonsense. Victims of the atrocities from the bordering areas were pouring into the metropolis and narrated the most woeful tales of the happenings there. Some lawless elements within the state had also the opportunity to join hands with the raiders and the communist elements in the eastern districts found that the moment was opportune to start disturbances in a big way. The situation all round was worsening overnight and the administration appeared to be rapidly demoralising. Qasim Razvi lost no time; he hurriedly drew up and placed before his party, plans to organise the local population in the disturbed areas for self-defence. In places, where there were not enough Muslims to face the situation, he proposed sending volunteers from other areas and to shift isolated Muslim families to safer spots.

The 'Ittehad' of course approved of the plan. The Government

came to know of it but in the absence of any effective alternative on hand they had no grounds on which they could object. Qasim Razvi went forward towards implementation of his schemes with fanatic zeal. The older volunteers were given a brief training and detailed instructions as to what they had to do and how they had to act and were soon rushed to all the disturbed areas. They had to get the local residents together, discipline and drill them and teach them the use of whatever weapon they could get hold of. Each unit was placed under a local command. Mostly the equipments for the projected self-defence consisted of locally made spears and swords. Wherever possible they were reinforced with old muzzle-loading guns. The volunteers sent out from the centre were usually equipped with muzzle-loaders and proper swords. In several places a number of local volunteers received quick training and were brought under some kind of discipline. They in turn were deputed to train others and so their numbers began to multiply and grow. All volunteers old or new styled themselves as 'Razakars'. The main pattern of defence was to divide each local unit of Razakars in two groups—one to guard the women and children and the property and the other to go forward and face the raiders or disturbing elements in advance. All volunteers were given strict instructions that they were not to touch any one other than raiders and were to afford protection to peaceful Muslim and Hindu inhabitants all alike. Out of necessity and to some extent due to the novelty of the movement the response was amazing. Most of the able bodied Muslims in every place got themselves enrolled as Razakars and along with them came, also, in appreciable numbers, Hindus and men of other communities. Thus there were Muslims, Hindus, high caste and low caste, Christians and others enlisting themselves. Once enrolled, they all became 'Razakars'. There was no further distinction of caste or creed. The preponderance of the Muslims was, however, so large that often the expression Razakar conveyed the sense of a Muslim volunteer. The procedure of enrolment was simple. Each one had to provide himself with a weapon or at least a big stick if possible mounted with a sharp spear like iron at the top and identify himself or herself with the main objectives and get registered at the nearest centre as a Razakar. In each village, at some fixed hour on



A Group of Razakars
Qasim Rizvi is second from left in front row.

certain days in a week the Razakars had to meet in an open place and drill themselves and learn to march in steps. Some of the Razakars, from their ancestral belongings or by borrowing or by purchase had equipped themselves with old muzzle-loader guns. The number of such guns, strewn all over the country was fairly large and any one who could afford a little money had no difficulty in obtaining them as there was no Arms Act in the State prohibiting the possession of such guns. However, most of the weapons had a mere show value. Of the guns so displayed by the Razakars not even half could fire a shot; quite a few of the rest were as much a source of danger to the user as to the target.

That is how the so much publicised 'Razakars' movement came into existence and grew overnight. Each time, Qasim Razvi would multiply the actual numbers enrolled by a figure at his will and announce that he had so many thousands or so many scores of thousands of Razakars. Their effectiveness in the role for which they had enlisted was even less. Nevertheless the movement had an amazing psychological effect on the masses. The people in the outlying areas who had been scared and afraid for some time past, now felt more confident of themselves and at least psychologically were better prepared to face any trouble. Their determination, in its turn, put a considerable check on the number of raids that had previously been mounting up.

There was also a gradual improvement in the discipline of the Razakars. Qasim Razvi and his colleagues used to move about from place to place collecting cast off fire-arms from every nook and corner and distributing them to the numerous Razakar centres and boosting up the morale of the Razakars in each place. Despite the fact that most of the fire-arms could never fire a shot, the village Razakars used to carry them about with a great sense of confidence and pride. The Government kept a close watch on the collections of Qasim Razvi. He must have in all collected perhaps some ten thousand swords, four or five thousand rickety muzzle-loaders, and a few hundred rifles and shot guns of all bores some of which had no ammunition. He had managed to get a dozen or so .303 rifles and a few dozen revolvers and made a great display of them. Some enterprising engineering repair

shopkeeper had crudely copied out for him three or four Sten guns and he had managed to get hold of a couple of hundred rounds of ammunition for them. He was proud of his possessions and his lieutenants used to go about exaggerating his wealth of arms and ammunition a thousand times.

Qasim Razvi could apply himself with fanatic enthusiasm to anything he took on hand and could infuse similar enthusiasm in a good number of his followers. Quite often a Razakar would part with his most precious belongings to secure for himself a muzzle-loader from anywhere. One enthusiastic Razakar appears to have sold all his land and purchased an imitation of a Sten gun for three or four thousand rupees (then about a thousand dollars) from a local workshop. The gun got jammed at the wrong moment and resulted in the loss of his own life.

Qasim Razvi himself would travel any distance and do anything if he thought there was a chance of getting a rifle or half a dozen muzzle loaders. On one occasion, I am told, he went to a place where there had been a temporary military camp a few years ago and spent five days digging pits at random all over. As luck would have it, during the exploration, the bottom of the soaking pit of a sceptic tank yielded a few hundred rounds of .303 ammunition. He at once believed that he had discovered an underground treasure of arms and ammunition and sent word to his friends that before long he would be providing them all with thousands of rifles and hundreds of thousands rounds of ammunition. Under his personal supervision, his followers dug up every soaking pit in the area, but there were no more rounds of .303 ammunition to be found. His adventure with the sceptic tanks which gave out foul gases of buried night-soil kept him confined to bed for quite a time after that.

Despite the many handicaps, the Razakar movement achieved an amazing psychological success and Qasim Razvi had the ability and the capacity to maintain the enthusiasm and discipline of his followers at a high pitch. Nevertheless, the strict orders to the Razakars to protect the life and property of all regardless of the caste and creed, were not always adhered to and instances were reported of the high-handedness of the Razakars with the local population. Such instances,

though few, were resented by many and at least in places where they occurred created a dislike and fear of the Razakars themselves. The Indian press was only too eager to make the fullest use of any such incident. The Congress-inspired newspapers started publishing highly exaggerated accounts of minor incidents and many purely fabricated fantastic stories. The Razakars were said to be roaming at large all over, threatening peace and security of the entire countryside and committing daily loot, arson and murder. The Hindustan Times took a leading part in the propaganda campaign. The persistent colourful stories published, gradually began to influence the more sober section of the Indian public opinion and skilful presentation, even succeeded in occasionally influencing the public opinion abroad. A certain number of Hindu families who had relatives in the Indian Union were persuaded to temporarily leave Hyderabad—they were told that India was soon going to launch a powerful military attack against Hyderabad and in that event the Razakars in desperation were sure to massacre the Hindus. In all, between ten to fifteen thousand Hindu families comprising of some fifty to sixty thousand persons thus went from the various towns of the state and moved across into the Indian territory. They left behind their properties in charge of their relatives and friends or servants. The leaders and the press of India made much capital out of this and stated that hundreds of thousands of people were migrating from Hyderabad and the life and honour of millions of Hindus in the State was at stake.

After the advent of Razakars there was lull for a period in the border raids and then there was a fresh outburst. This time the raiders were better organized and were all equipped with modern arms and plentiful supply of ammunition. Each party was led by a fully trained person or persons. The ill-equipped Razakars, in most cases, were no match for them; yet the raiders did not have their own way all the time and the infiltrations were not deep either. In the interior, also, lawlessness and disorders remained under check and excepting a few sporadic Communist outbursts, the situation on the whole remained peaceful. On certain occasions, large quantities of arms and ammunitions were left behind by the raiders in their skirmishes with the Razakars which greatly enriched their otherwise meagre arsenals. Thus the

'Razakar Organization' was steadily swelling in numbers and slowly gaining in strength. Qasim Razvi had given up his civilian clothes and had started proudly moving about in a shabby military uniform, at first wearing the insignia and stars of a General and later of a Field Marshal all of his own making. He drove about in an old jeep accompanied by a couple of still more shabbily uniformed *aide-de-camps* wearing red ribbon on their arms and each one carrying a pistol. But for his craze for collection of old and derelict firearms and his going about as Marshal of the highly exaggerated number of Razakars, there was nothing about Qasim Razvi that could be described as irrational. In his public speeches he was fiery only when he made a reference to the attempts of the Indian Union to force Hyderabad into accession. He always appeared anxious to maintain and strengthen communal harmony between all sections of the people living in the State. One ambition of his life was to see a much larger number of Hindus among the Razakars. A theory that he had begun to preach was that by living under common slogans as Razakars, would bring all the communities in the State much closer together and would make each individual far more tolerant of other's feelings and susceptibilities. He had minutely watched the spirit of comradeship and the unity of purpose and action grow among the Razakars of all creeds and claimed that in that lay the future of Hyderabad. He thought that in this manner Hyderabad would set a practical example of communal harmony and would in that respect give lead to India and to Pakistan in dealing with communal matters.

Although some of Qasim Razvi's beliefs and the ideals he preached appeared at times dogmatic, it was not easy to find instances where his sincerity of purpose could be doubted. Nor did he seem blind to the fact that a semi-military movement such as the Razakars had potential dangers and had to be wound up as early as circumstances permitted. There was, however, no compromise with him on the issue of the accession of Hyderabad to India either in form or in substance. On this point he was determined, and so were his followers, to fight to the last. He was fully conscious of the fact also that a completely sovereign State of Hyderabad would not be practical politics owing to its geographical position and as such Hyderabad would have to accept

certain limitations imposed on its political freedom by India. He, however, did not have much grasp of the present and future economic issues. In other matters he was usually guarded in giving vent to his views. He was instinctively conscious of the machinations of his rival groups in the 'Ittehad' ranks and was duly cautious. Yet, when momentous decisions had to be taken involving serious compromises necessitated by practical considerations he exhibited a great deal of personal courage and accepted solutions to which his other formidable colleagues, including those in the Cabinet, had never the courage to agree. At no time was he in personal touch or under the direct influence of the All-India Muslim League and his contacts with Jinnah were hardly any.

Despite Qasim Razvi's reasonable and practical approach to most matters, some of his pronouncements from the public platform did indeed incalculable harm to the cause of Hyderabad. On one occasion he had said that if ever India launched upon an armed invasion of Hyderabad the flag of the Nizam would fly over the Red Fort of Delhi and the waters of the Bay of Bengal would wash the feet of the Nizam. Such rash pronouncements no matter how lightly made proved to be extremely unfortunate. A reference to the Red Fort at Delhi, once symbol of Muslim Rule over India, particularly raised a storm of indignation all over India. Qasim Razvi when censured for the provocative and harmful character of his statement produced in his defence extracts from the public speech of a responsible Minister of the Indian Union, made a few days earlier, conveying the assurance that tricolour of the Indian Union was soon to fly over every village of the Nizam's territory.

Many of the responsible Hindu leaders of Hyderabad were personal friends of Qasim Razvi and those who knew him well believed that despite his strong pro-Muslim outlook he was in no way anti-Hindu or anti any other community. In the settlement of outstanding inter-communal issues, the difficulty he experienced was that there were unsurmountable rivalries among the Hindu leaders, with the result that any understanding arrived at with one group was jointly condemned and disowned by the rest and at no time would the Hindu leaders of all shades of opinion agree to sit round the same table. The

Hyderabad State Congress was closely linked to the All-India Congress and was dissuaded by the latter from attempting any settlement. Qasim Razvi was particularly bitter against the leaders of the State Congress for acting on the dictates of the All India Congress against the interests of Hyderabad.

Qasim Razvi led a simple private life. He was stringent with public money to a degree that caused annoyance to his co-workers. It is said that on one occasion for a big rally in some place of some ten thousand Razakars, the organizers asked for fifty thousand rupees but all that he provided them was five hundred. Usually he showed poor concept of the relative values of big money—it was not easy for him for instance to distinguish clearly the worth of a hundred thousand from a million. Despite all the baseless propaganda in the Indian Press about his being heavily financed by the Government and the Nizam the actual money that passed through his hands was surprisingly little. His answer to all demands made on him by his co-workers was just simple—he did not have the money. He was only concerned with their business. Such obviously unreasonable attitude, amazingly simplified the conduct of his political campaigns, and yet their effectiveness was at no time impaired. It also developed a great deal of initiative and resourcefulness among his co-workers. In undivided India, many a political enterprise failed on account of mishandling of public finances and many a political career was ruined on account of misappropriation of public funds. Qasim Razvi and his followers had so little money to deal with that chances of any financial scandal were hardly any.

It has been alleged by those who did not know and those who knew and yet chose to talk differently, that Qasim Razvi carried out the Razakar movement with heavy financial backing of the Government and other financial interests of the country. Qasim Razvi did receive small amounts from time to time from private donors but invariably they were for specific purposes, usually of an emergent nature. On a few occasions, the Government aided him with funds if it was any well defined purpose but at no time such aid exceeded a few thousand rupees. The only comparatively large amount that was ever paid to the 'Ittehad' was to assist the victims of the border raids, but even there it was under five hundred thousand rupees. For

the Razakar movement as such, he neither made a demand nor he ever received any help from the Government. The insinuation that the Nizam was privately financing the movement was simply absurd. Anyone who knows the Nizam and his instincts where his own money was concerned would hardly accept the possibility.

As in the matter of his money resources so in the matter of arms and ammunition at his disposal, Qasim Razvi kept the imagination of the outsiders baffled for a long time. The Indian press used to be full of fantastic stories about the potent armed strength of the Razakars, but he made no effort to refute those statements; if anything he, indirectly, helped to get these stories more widely circulated and more exaggerated. At least for the time being the propaganda helped his cause.

Here is an interesting example of Qasim Razvi's shrewd tactics: On the occasion of the Nizam's Birthday in May 1947, the 'Ittehad' arranged a rally of the Razakars and some fifty thousand Muslim and non-Muslim volunteers were to march past. For several weeks, prior to that, he made frantic attempts to get together a few arms to display on the occasion but failed. He appealed to Government authorities but neither the Army nor the police were prepared to oblige him by lending a few weapons even for a couple of hours. No more than a few hundred of the fifty thousand had fire arms that they could display. Thereupon, he made a public appeal, giving all imaginable reasons, that no Razakar should carry any arms upon his person during the march past. On the day of the parade, tens of thousands of men, women and children, old and young, uniformed and otherwise, marched past before an equal number of spectators, in the most orderly manner—'eyes right' to him—but not one had any fire arm. The occasion had attracted a large number of journalists and newsmen from all over India as well as other countries. There were representatives present of some leading newspapers of Europe and America to witness the sight. The whole function was orderly and impressive. At the end of the show all the representatives of the press surrounded him; each was inquisitive about the arms and ammunition of the Razakars. Very innocently, Razvi replied that the Razakars just had none. Now, after all the publicity that the armed strength of Raza-

kars had received in the Indian press, no one was going to accept such an innocent denial. In other places, people had seen the Razakars moving about with various types of fire-arms. It was a challenge to their credulity to accept such an innocent denial from Razvi. Conjectures ran wild and most of them left under the impression that whether good or bad in quality, the Razakars did have a large stock of arms and ammunition and that Qasim Razvi was shrewd and for strategic reasons did not want to display their full strength. Some of course saw through the game but the majority went convinced that the Razakars were a potent factor—exactly the impression that Qasim Razvi wanted to create!

While Qasim Razvi talked high and loud of the Razakars, he knew full well that the so-called Razakars might, had little more than propaganda value intended primarily to boost up the morale of the people inside and to set the outsiders thinking. The Government of India and other responsible leaders of the Indian Union knew equally well that the Razakars neither constituted a military strength nor were they a menace to the peace and tranquillity of the country but it was a good investment on their part to publicise them as a potent and dangerous element.

Organized publicity in India of the wild stories about the Razakars was an important factor in Indian plans against Hyderabad. The might and menace of the Razakars was given great prominence in public pronouncements and official announcements. Influenced by the propaganda carried out by India, representatives of a number of leading newspapers from all over the world visited Hyderabad one after the other. Several news agencies posted additional staff. Time after time, many men and women from the realm of journalism, mostly on their own, individually and in batches, roamed over the country from end to end and went back disillusioned and convinced that the fantastic reports appearing in the Indian press were pure and simple myth designed and fabricated only for some other objective that India might have in view. When their version of the true facts appeared in the world press even the high ranking leaders of the Government of India did not hesitate to say that the representatives of the foreign press, including some of the well-known correspondents of

the leading and most respectable newspapers of Europe and America, had been heavily bribed by the Government of Hyderabad!

CHAPTER X

THE CHOICE OF A PRIME MINISTER

IN OCTOBER, 1947, Chhatari relinquished his office for the second time and the Nizam was faced again with the problem of finding a new Prime Minister. Within one year he had been bitten twice, once by his choice of Mirza Ismail, and the second time by the re-appointment of Chhatari. He had to be more careful this time. He had also made up his mind and made no secret of it either that the majority in the new Cabinet would be of popular ministers. The main issue with him was to find a Prime Minister who would run the Government properly and face the difficult external problems and balance the complex internal forces. He privately asked the advice of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah who was now at the head of the new independent country of Pakistan as Governor-General. But, constitutional minded as Jinnah was, he declined to make any suggestion and stated that in his present capacity it would not be fair on his part to offer any advice even privately. The Nizam was, therefore, entirely left to himself to make the choice. The vested interests wanted no change in the Cabinet, but he was not prepared to allow the old order to continue any longer.

The Nizam had been considering for some time past the name of Ghulam Mohammed who had just then taken over the portfolio of Finance in the newly formed Government of Pakistan. Ghulam Mohammed had served before in Hyderabad as Finance Minister but during the period had not had very happy relations with the Nizam. He had relinquished his office earlier than the contracted period owing to a slight facial stroke. Nevertheless he had a soft corner for Hyderabad and despite the differences, cherished a sense of personal devotion to the Ruler. When the offer for the Premiership of Hyderabad reached him he consulted his doctors and friends and was definitely told that in his present state of health he would not be able to withstand the strain and by accepting the offer he would be doing disservice both to the office and to himself. He, therefore, declined

the offer on grounds of health but assured the Nizam that he would be glad to serve him in any other capacity. The refusal left the Nizam again in difficulty. He tried to select some one from the Hindu community but those within the State did not appear suitable enough to shoulder the responsibility at the critical time: those outside were not enough known to him to be trusted. He started finding the reactions of the leaders of the public opinion on the matter. Qazim Razvi submitted a note wherein he suggested the names of El Edroos, the army Commander, Nawab Deen Yar Jung, the head of the Police and myself. The Nizam, however, could not seriously entertain the idea of either appointing El Edroos or Deen Yar Jung as the Prime Minister, both of whom he knew well. He did not know me well enough and his first reaction about my choice to fill the post was negative. He still kept on looking round both in and outside the country. There were several names mentioned and speculation was rife. During this period, the Nizam sent for me a couple of times but we only had a general exchange of views.

One morning Raheem, who was the Ittehad Member in the Cabinet, came to me and informed me that the Nizam had made up his mind to invite me to form a new Government. The news did not altogether come to me as a surprise. I, myself, had been thinking over the matter for some time and for various reasons had decided not to take up the responsibility even if I were asked. A purely political career had not much attraction for me. I had previously declined the offers both of Akbar Hydari and the Nawab of Chhatari to join their Cabinets. I had not shown much enthusiasm either when in one of our conversations, Jinnah wanted my reactions over joining the Cabinet of the new Government of Pakistan. Later that day I received a message from the Nizam that he wanted to see me the following forenoon. I saw the Nizam at the appointed hour and found both Moin Nawaz Jung leader of the new Hyderabad Delegation and Rahim present there. The Nizam broached the subject without any formality. So direct was his approach that I was a little taken aback. I told him, however, plainly that I felt it would be in better interest of the country and of the Nizam himself that I should be spared and he should choose some one else to take over the great responsibility. The

Nizam sat up in his chair at my observations and asked me to suggest any other alternative. Again I was taken aback. A little later I did suggest one or two names but he disposed them of as unsuitable. He then asked me what I thought of Zahid Hussain who also had served for some time as Finance Minister in Hyderabad. At the moment he was holding the post of the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Delhi. I thought he would do well. The Nizam at once drew a pad and started writing out a telegram to Jinnah. He stated that he had two names before him for appointment as Prime Minister—one Zahid Hussain's and the other my own and wanted Jinnah's personal reactions in the matter. The fact that he had declined to offer any advice only a few days ago did not deter the Nizam from asking him again. Jinnah's reply came after a couple of days. He had advised the Nizam to leave both Zahid Hussain and myself out and make some other choice. I was immediately sent for and shown the telegram. I told the Nizam that I was not surprised at Jinnah's reaction and requested him to act accordingly. I left him after a long conversation, feeling somewhat relieved that at least for the time being I was spared.

While these developments were taking place rumours had gone round that there was every possibility of my becoming the Prime Minister. All the newspapers freely began to forecast my name and many of them hailed the choice. Scores of prominent citizens of Hyderabad started urging me to take up the responsibility. Strangely enough, a good many of them were my Hindu friends from all classes—commercial, political and others. I was surprised that I should be the common choice of so many divergent shades of opinion. After my first talk with the Nizam I had asked some of my Hindu friends as to the degree of co-operation that I would receive from the various political parties of their community. Their reactions were mixed but mostly favourable. At the suggestion of some, I agreed to have an exchange of views with Ramanand Tirth, the President, and B. Ram Kishen Rao, a prominent leader of the Hyderabad State Congress, both of whom were political detenus at the time. A meeting was therefore arranged and was followed by another. I had friendly relations with Pannalal Pitty—a prominent Hindu banker and fairly influential member of his community—and I invited him to be present

on both the occasions. During the talks, the Swamy was not very communicative. He indirectly conveyed to me that it was not fair that he should be asked to express views on any political issue when he was not a free man. He nevertheless showed great warmth of feelings towards me. Most of the time he tried to convey to me that he was making a deep study of the Holy Koran. Ram Kishen Rao was less reserved in his conversation but made it very clear that in regard to the policy of the State Congress, Ramanand Tirth alone, as President of that organization, could speak with authority. I felt that there was little more that I could expect from anyone who was not free. Pannalal felt disappointed at the too apparent reserve of Tirth and urged upon me to try and secure his release early. He assured me that as a free person Tirth would offer every reasonable co-operation.

While I was trying to assess the political atmosphere, Qasim Razvi came to see me a couple of times and assured me that if I were to accept the post he and his party would extend their fullest co-operation. Others who had no political alignments felt that I should be the greatest common factor among the very divergent shades of opinion. But, in spite of all these assurances, I did not feel prepared to take over the responsibility. In the meantime, Jinnah's advice to the Nizam had, at least for the time being, shelved the issue.

I had breathed a sigh of relief and got busy over my usual affairs but the relief turned to be of a very short duration. Within a few days the Nizam sent for me again and told me that after giving the matter a good deal of further thought he had come to the conclusion that he should urge upon me to accept the Premiership and as a son of the soil, I should not decline in such a grave hour for the country. He appeared extremely serious, but was gently persistent in his approach. The Nizam is noted for his remarkable power of persuasion and he certainly was at his best that day. I could not maintain an absolute refusal for long and finally agreed to think over the matter and communicate to him my decision in a day or two.

I then sent a brief memorandum to the Nizam. I conveyed my agreement to form an 'Interim Government' along the lines that had on several occasions been talked over between us in a general way. The Cabinet would consist of four Muslims and four Hindu ministers

from the public and four chosen from among the officials in addition to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Prime Minister. The composite "Interim Government" should last only till a new Constitution was framed for the State and thereafter the choice of government would entirely rest with the Legislature. I also outlined that in the peculiar circumstances of Hyderabad where a delicate balance of power had to be maintained between the two major communities, at least in the earlier period, I would endeavour to reserve in the constitution the power of nomination of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister with the Nizam with the proviso that, of the two, one should be a Hindu and the other a Muslim. The suggestion was particularly welcome to the Nizam; from his point of view it meant that he would not be required to give up all his powers immediately. In the memorandum I had further made it clear that I would be accepting the office only as a stop-gap arrangement and on the definite understanding that I would not be called up to serve for more than three to six months; during that period the Nizam should make up his mind and choose some other person to be the head of the "Interim government". He did not altogether object to this last condition either, but preferred to treat it as a private understanding between us while the official announcement would be that my appointment was going to be for one year.

The most important feature of the arrangements between the Nizam and myself was the clear cut understanding on the issue of future relationship with India. We had discussed dispassionately and threadbare the geographical, political, economic and other patent and latent limitations within which Hyderabad could survive and the price that would have to be paid to maintain even the limited independence of the State and the extent to which we could yield under the pressure of the Indian Union. There were differences over details but there was complete unanimity between us that on no account and at no stage there shall be "accession" to India either in form or in substance. Short of that, we fully agreed that we should try and build up the best of friendly relations with the Indian Union and try to accommodate their wishes and viewpoints to the extent possible. Towards Pakistan our mutual attitude was of unfettered affection.

Amidst the much too serious discussions between the Nizam and myself over major issues of policy and action, a light and somewhat amusing incident intervened. I was inclined to accept only a token salary for the short period for which I had agreed to accept the office. The Nizam did not approve of the idea. It was against the traditions of Hyderabad and would set an embarrassing precedent for the future. He was at the same time conscious of the fact that I was being called out of a place in business where the emoluments were on altogether different pedastal than the conventional salary of a Prime Minister. Someone suggested that I should be paid the same salary as a predecessor, Sir Mirza Ismail which worked out to a little over Rs. 6,400/- a month. I was in no mood to discuss the matter and simply said that any salary fixed by the Nizam would be willingly accepted by me. Rahim was present on the occasion and he mentioned a figure of Rs. 6,500/-. The Nizam's bargaining element got active. He sat up in his chair, stared into my eyes, then banged the table with his fist and said why not we settle it at a round figure of Rs. 6,000/- (about $1,800) a month! His gesture, his look of expectancy, and a slight suggestive smile on his face amused me. I said it suited me fine. There was triumphant joy in his eyes—he had scored a point over me in the first round. Later, I believe he remarked before others that although I had a business career I was still a gentleman!

The preliminaries thus settled, it was agreed that I should take charge two days later—that is, a day after signing the Stand-still Agreement with India. The "*firman*" (all orders of the Nizam were called "*firman*") announcing my appointment was issued to that effect the following day.

About mid-day on the 30th November, 1947 the Cabinet Secretary came in my office with a little black box in his hand and a printed copy of the Firman and presented them over to me. Receiving the Firman and the office box, which only contained the seal of the Prime Minister, was the simple ceremony of one being installed as "Prime Minister"! Later I was to go and take the oath of allegiance before the Nizam which however the Nizam felt was not necessary.

The installation ceremony had taken place at my business precincts. My colleagues in business and several others who had worked with

me for years had all crowded around me. There was plenty of emotion and some joy in their faces. Most of them seemed to feel that it was a great day. Some perhaps thought otherwise, but did not say so.

After a few words of farewell and advice to my old associates. stepped into the State Car and accompanied by the Cabinet Secretary drove to the official residence of the Prime Minister called the "SHAH MANZIL". My wife and the family thought they were happier in their own home and were not prepared to shift. So the official residence became my abode only during office hours which, however, usually extended from early morning to late hours at night of every day of the week.

CHAPTER XI

FORMATION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

ON ASSUMING office, I decided to continue on with the existing ministers till such time that I was able to form a new ministry. Moin Nawaz Jung had returned from Delhi after concluding the Stand-still Agreement. The main task confronting me was one to form a ministry in which all shades of opinion might get included and the other to see to the implementation of the Stand-still Agreement. From the day India had assumed independence the new Government in power had completely blockaded all movement of goods from and into Hyderabad. The stoppage of all import and export had begun to make its effects felt on the general economy of the country and the pinch was being felt all over; the situation had to be resolved with least loss of time.

In a country-wide radio broadcast I announced the purpose for which I had accepted the office and broadly outlined my policy in the internal and external affairs. The external affairs primarily meant relationship with the Government of India. In the same broadcast I also announced the release of all the leaders of the Hyderabad State Congress and other political organisations and made an appeal to every section of the population regardless of caste and creed to set aside their differences, if any, and get together and march forward as one united people.

Ramanand Tirth and his colleagues were all free men now; with them and the leaders of other political groups I initiated negotiations for the formation of the 'Interim Government'. I was mystified by a curious air of uncertainty and helplessness about the leaders of the State Congress; there was a great deal of distrust among themselves and unanimity was only over their dislike of Tirth. Tirth himself remained crudely evasive all the time. I was informed by those who were in close touch with the State Congress leaders that they were all helpless as they were not free to function on their own. Tirth in particular and the rest generally were committed to act only on the dictates of the All-India Congress High Command at Delhi and to

carry out its instructions in detail. A few days later, Tirth informed me that he was now willing to extend the co-operation of his organization but before doing so was anxious to consult some of the Members of his Working Committee who were still outside the State. I told him, now that all restrictions had been removed, his colleagues were welcome back to Hyderabad and I reaffirmed the assurance that there was no need for any one of them to entertain any doubt in their minds. After this, most of them came back; only a few did not return. Tirth, however, felt that unless he went out of the State for a few days and consulted the rest he would not be able to finalise all the details. He sought my permission to go out and said his absence from Hyderabad would not be for more than a week or ten days. I knew he was lying but decided to take him at his word. I accordingly communicated to him that he was a perfectly free man and could act as he pleased.

Before Tirth left Hyderabad he wanted clarification of certain points and I asked him to meet Moin Nawaz Jung and talk over matters with him. He could see me later any time if he wished to have further exchange of views. Tirth appeared satisfied with his talks with Moin Nawaz Jung and did not think it was necessary to see me until after his return.

Tirth left Hyderabad and almost from the moment he crossed the border, press reports started pouring in that he had launched a major propaganda campaign against the State. The administration of the neighbouring provinces generously assisted him by arranging press interviews and public meetings which he addressed. Cabinet ministers of the Provincial Governments of Madras and Bombay themselves presided over some of the meetings and eulogised him. From the public platforms and through the press he said that most brutal atrocities were being committed against the Hindus in the State and how heroically he had managed to escape from the tyrannies of detention he was placed under and how lucky he was to come out and tell them the tale. Most inflammatory public statements were made the same time by persons like Chief Ministers of Provinces and other top ranking leaders both in and outside the Government of India. An important clause of the Stand-still Agreement between India and Hyderabad was that both governments would discourage any adverse

propaganda against the other. That, so soon after the signing the agreement, such high ranking personalities within the governments in India should so unreservedly and deliberately indulge in such false and obnoxious propaganda against Hyderabad belied even the worst expectations. Formal representations made to the Government of India over specific instances only brought back the reply that India had now become a free country and as such the press and every one else were free to say what they liked. Subsequent events soon proved that the Indian press was not after all so free and that the Government of India were not so helpless as they pretended!

One day in an outwardly casual manner, the Nizam questioned my wisdom in releasing unconditionally all those that had been interned by the previous governments on grounds of their suspected share in the disturbances that had occurred in the various parts of the State. I listened but said nothing in reply.

A few days after Tirth had left Hyderabad, a most dastardly attack was made on the person of the Nizam from which he had a miraculous escape. A youth who had apparently been well trained in the art of throwing hand grenades, hurled one at the car of the Nizam just as he had set out on his usual afternoon drive. The grenade hit the car just at the edge of the window, rebounded, fell on the road and exploded, blasting a fairly large piece of the road concrete. Investigations that followed proved that the act was the outcome of a deep and well planned conspiracy. There were four other persons posted on that day at different vantage points along the route, two of whom were arrested by the police with the hand grenades in their possession. The Congress leaders disavowed any association with the incident but they were not prepared to say whether it meant that Tirth, their president, had no connection with it either!

The Nizam exhibited a remarkable phase of his character on the occasion. He stopped the car, came back to the spot and personally took charge of the local situation. He gave strict orders to the excited crowd around not to touch the miscreant who might have otherwise been lynched in a few minutes. Later, he also passed orders

that even though the attempt was made on his person, the miscreant should not be tried by any special court and should be dealt with under the normal process of law. He took special care to see that every facility and legal assistance was provided to the assailant to defend himself in the court of law.

The formation of a new Government with four Hindus and four Muslim public ministers and four from official ranks did not turn out to be such a simple matter. The issue with the Muslim block in the Legislature was in a way simpler as they all belonged to the "Ittehad" group and if they could reach an agreement among themselves, they could straight away nominate their representatives. The political associations of the Hindu legislators were divergent and the situation had become more complex as some of the influential Hindu organizations, including the State Congress, were absent as they had boycotted the elections and had no representation in legislature. On my part, I was anxious so far as possible not to leave out any group on technical grounds. Tirth, who had promised to convene a meeting of his working committee soon and put up his proposals, was roaming about in different provinces of the Indian Union and showed no sign of return. In his absence, the other leaders of the State Congress in Hyderabad were not prepared to take the responsibility on their own shoulders despite their dislike of Tirth and disapproval of his activities. I was prepared to offer two out of the four ministerial seats to the State Congress even though the organization had no representation in the Legislature. After protracted negotiations, the Congress leaders present, agreed to accept the offer of two seats but later changed their minds and decided to nominate only one member in the Cabinet. They were also very eager that the acceptance of their nominee should be in his individual capacity and not on behalf of the party, as those present were not in a position to take such an important decision without the formal concurrence of the Working Committee and their President. I was not prepared to wait any longer, and decided to include one leader of the State Congress and distribute the remaining three seats among other Hindu political parties in the Legislature.

Though the right of nominating the ministers lay with the respective political parties yet their acceptance and recommendation to



Hyderabad Cabinet in Session,—December 1947

Mir Laik Ali, P. M. is in the Centre.

To his right: Pingal Venkatrama Reddy, Deputy P. M., Moin Nawaz Jung, Abdul Hameed Khan, C. Ramachari Joshi.

To his left: Abdul Rahim, Fazal Nawaz Jung, Raj Mohan Lal, Abdul Raoof, B. S. Venkat Rao, Yamin Zuberi.

the Nizam for his final approval rested with me. By now, the "Ittehad" had sent their list of names of Muslim ministers. Both the Nizam and I felt that the panel was not the best that the "Ittehad" could produce; apparently, in their choice, a great deal more weight had been given to party consideration than to personal merits and ability and the needs of administration. Qasim Razvi did not find himself in a strong enough position to take the matter in his own hands and had to submit to the pressure of his colleagues. The issue had been placed before and decided by the Working Committee of the "Ittehad". After the names had been voted any change therein became still more difficult for Qasim Razvi. I refused to include certain names in the ministry and pressed Qasim Razvi to reconsider the matter and revise the list. He tried but did not succeed. I had only two alternatives left before me—one was to drop all his nominees from the new Cabinet and the other to inform the Nizam of my inability to form a proper ministry. I was about to adopt the latter course when Qasim Razvi came forward with the proposal that I might provisionally accept the names approved by his Working Committee and send out later any of them abroad as Agent Generals of Hyderabad, which would enable him to propose fresh names after obtaining my previous consent. On my insistence, Qasim Razvi communicated this undertaking in writing and it was only after this that the Nizam accorded his approval.

The Nizam had made it definitely clear to me that with one exception he would not agree to my retaining any of the outgoing ministers in the new Cabinet. He urged upon me that it was in the interest of the country to give opportunity to new blood. Certain other persons who were outwardly in great favour with him were also not acceptable to him as ministers. He told me that he knew them better and had not faith enough either in their capacity or their sincerity. I was obliged to revise and re-revise my list many times before I could finalize the matter.

The Nizam was equally particular about the distribution of the more important portfolios. There was both reason and obstinacy in the stand he took. I breathed a sigh of great relief when the hurdles were got over one by one and the matter was finalised. The task of

forming a ministry had turned out to be far more difficult than I had anticipated.

CHAPTER XII

THE ARRIVAL OF AN AGENT GENERAL

My more immediate concern was to restore law and order in the bordering areas. Insecurity of life and property was causing panic among the inhabitants of those regions and infuriating the people elsewhere. The local administrative machinery had virtually come to a stand-still. There had also been instances of reprisals. On certain occasions the infuriated people of those areas, joined at times by unruly elements, had crossed the border and inflicted injury and damage on the inhabitants of the Indian territory. Such incidents, though few, had resulted in a great uproar from the press and public platform of the Indian Union. A little collaboration with the neighbouring Provincial Governments could effectively improve the situation soon. I had previously known some of the Chief Ministers and other ministers of these Provinces and I felt that personal contact with them would help.

I sent personal invitations to the Chief Ministers of Bombay, Madras and Central Provinces to visit Hyderabad with their Home Ministers for a friendly discussion with a view to chalk out a common line of action. The response from two of the three Provinces was immediate and in the affirmative. The Chief Minister of C.P. agreed to come to Hyderabad on the date suggested by me; the Chief Minister of Madras extended a counter invitation for all to meet at Madras on the grounds that he could not leave the station as the Legislative Assembly of his Province was in session. Only Bombay wanted to defer the matter to some future date on some minor pretext. The Agent General designate of India, K.M. Munshi, was there and he worked successfully both at Bombay and Delhi to prevent such a meeting taking place. I was advised later both from Madras and the Central Provinces that to their regret the State Department at Delhi did not approve of the proposed meeting.

The news of K.M. Munshi's nomination as India's Agent General at Hyderabad caused me a great deal of concern. Munshi's reputation as a rank communalist and his past dealings with Hyderabad were too

well known. The part he had played in the conduct of the Satyagraha (civil disobedience) movement in the Western districts of Hyderabad, only a few years ago was fresh in everyone's memory. His choice was a definite indication of the future intentions of the Government of India. A mild suggestion from Hyderabad that the respective Agent Generals of the two Governments, if possible, be appointed with the previous unofficial consent of the respective governments, was flatly turned down by Delhi. The Government of India insisted that each government should be free to appoint whomsoever it liked.

Soon after the appointment of Munshi was announced, it was communicated to me that all matters of common concern would be dealt by the Agent General and all future correspondence would take place through him. It seemed to be taken for granted that the Agent General was to play the role of the one time British Resident at Hyderabad. Munshi himself, even before he took over the assignment began to talk and act as if he was the representative of a Paramount Power despite the most emphatic negation of 'paramountcy' in the Stand-still Agreement.

Never perhaps in the history has the arrival of a diplomatic representative at any place been preceded with such excitement as that of the Agent General of India in Hyderabad. A few days in advance of Munshi, there arrived two junior officers of the Government of India. According to the terms of the Stand-still Agreement, Hyderabad had undertaken to provide suitable accommodation to the Agent General and his staff. In the days of the British, the expansive and monumental 'Hyderabad Residency' used to be the official residence of the 'British Residents' at Hyderabad and for generations, regarded as the symbol of British Paramountcy over the State. The passing away of the British paramountcy was marked by the symbolic return of the buildings to Hyderabad. So strong were the feelings of the Nizam and people in the matter that the confirmation of the return of these buildings was incorporated as one of the terms of the Stand-still Agreement. Only on the special request of the Government of India, a part of the ancillary buildings was temporarily allowed to be occupied for a small treasury of the Government of India, which distributed pensions etcetera to the ex-servicemen till some alternate accommoda-

tion was found. To accommodate the new Agent General of India, the Government of Hyderabad had arranged a spacious building in one of the most exclusive residential areas of the metropolis. The building was set in the middle of a beautiful garden and was well liked by the two junior officers of the Government of India. Incidentally, it happened to be in close proximity to my own permanent abode. A day later, however, the two officers communicated that its location was too far away from the centre of the city and that they had received instructions from Delhi to secure accommodation for the Agent General in 'Hyderabad Residency'. The suggestion was too obviously a crude attempt to show off that India had stepped into the shoes of the British and assumed 'paramountcy'. The mild request was followed by insistence and soon assumed the shape of pressure from New Delhi.

Now, whatever happened the Nizam and the people of Hyderabad were not prepared to accept any outward sign of 'paramountcy' of India over Hyderabad or to treat the Agent General of India as a successor of the 'British Resident'. Delhi was equally keen not to miss the opportunity from the very start and the incessant pressure soon developed into a first class crisis. Several hurried and some strongly worded telegrams passed between Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, and the Nizam on the subject, but India remained adamant on its demand and Hyderabad equally so in its refusal. Later, the demand was slightly modified that the occupation would only be temporary till some suitable accommodation was found, but Hyderabad was not prepared to allow the occupation of the 'symbolic buildings' by India's Agent General even for a minute. Even as the notes were being exchanged between Delhi and Hyderabad a most incredulous event took place. Late one night, the two officers of the Government of India who had been staying as government guests at one of the Government Guest houses, silently sneaked into a couple of anti-rooms of the main 'Residency Buildings'. Next morning when their presence there was discovered and they were politely asked to leave, they refused. Their forcible ejection would have led to an immediate political crisis with India which Delhi was only too anxious to precipitate and which I was equally determined to avoid. The following day, Mountbatten in a telegram to the Nizam suggested that in view of the objection of

Hyderabad to the use of 'Hyderabad Residency' by the Agent General of India, he may be allowed to occupy the 'Bolarum Residency'—a place about 15 miles from the city where the 'British Residents' used to spend their summer months. Hyderabad's objection in principle still remained and the Nizam communicated his inability to agree to the suggested alternative. The refusal greatly infuriated the new rulers of India and in an excited meeting of the Cabinet at Delhi they decided to forcibly occupy the 'Hyderabad Residency'.

The British, under an old treaty with Hyderabad used to maintain several army units at Bolarum. With the transfer of power along with the rest of the Indian Forces, these units had been made over to the new Government of India, but they had not all as yet left Bolarum. Orders were issued by Delhi to the Agent General to make use of these army units and force his way into the 'Hyderabad Residency'. Information reached me later that evening that the units at Bolarum had received instructions for immediate mobilization and the heavy armoured units were getting ready for action. A very delicate situation had fast developed. I immediately called the Army Commander of the Hyderabad Forces. He assured me that apart from the subsequent consequences, for the time being, he was ready to stop the Bolarum armoured units from forcing their way to the 'Hyderabad Residency'. The Nizam was so infuriated over the whole affair that even before consulting me he had passed orders that if the Indian Army made any move forward it should be stopped by force. There was tense excitement all over the city; so it was all over India. In the evening Qasim Razvi addressed a large public meeting and stated that if India ever tried to establish paramountcy through the back door of the 'Residency' the public would raze to the ground that symbolic monument and throw every brick of the building into the Musi river that flowed by its side.

All night long I spent consulting my colleagues, the Army authorities and several others. In the early hours of the following morning, I ordered mobilization of the Hyderabad forces, but gave strict orders to keep them well behind any possible point of contact with the Indian armies. Any clash between the two, I knew, would immediately lead to a full scale war between Hyderabad and India and that I had to

avert at any price. A few hours later I received a trunk telephone call from Munshi. In the conversation he appeared reasonably cordial and not too unfriendly. He suggested that instead of occupying any building in such unpleasant manner he would like to be treated as a guest of the Hyderabad Government and be put up at the 'Bolarum Residency' for a few days. Such a gesture would not do any harm to Hyderabad and save the prestige of the Government of India. He further conveyed to me his personal assurance that within a fortnight he would vacate the building and shift to some other house. That was the first and it turned out to be the last time that Munshi appeared earnest in his tone and dignified in his approach. The proposal was distasteful to me personally. I had, on the other side, an infuriated Nizam and still more infuriated public opinion to deal with. At any rate, I decided to accept this suggestion. I was determined to avoid a major conflict over what must appear to the outside world a mere matter of occupying a building. The gigantic propaganda machinery of the Government of India had been in full blast over the hourly developments in Hyderabad. The papers all over India were full of the 'Hyderabad Residency' issue and world attention was getting focussed on to it. Mountbatten, by his personal association and efforts, had effectively influenced most of the foreign journalists at Delhi and had made them believe that Hyderabad was being perfectly childish and foolish in getting involved into a major armed conflict with India over the issue of a mere building.

After a good deal of effort I finally obtained the consent of the Nizam to accept the compromise suggested by Munshi and extended a formal invitation to him on behalf of the government. I then made a public announcement that for a few days Munshi would remain the guest of the Government of Hyderabad and would be accommodated at the 'Bolarum Residency'.

At the behest of the Government of India, the two junior officers had issued hundreds of invitations on behalf of K.M. Munshi, the Agent General of India, to the officials and other prominent citizens in Hyderabad for a reception at the 'Hyderabad Residency'. Munshi himself was very embarrassed over it all and said that at least personally he should not be blamed for it and attributed it entirely to the State

Ministry at Delhi. Another series of invitations had also been sent out to the Nizam and his family and other notabilities of the State for a dinner party at the same building. On his request, I agreed to save him from further personal embarrassment and had new invitations issued for a reception at some other place, on my behalf, to meet Mr. Munshi.

The arrival of the Indian Agent General appeared like a mighty political and social hurricane visiting the State. Public feelings had run high all over India and in Hyderabad. Nervous and expectant eyes all over were anxiously on the lookout as to what would happen next. Munshi was originally scheduled to arrive on the 5th January 1948 by the normal daily service plane. Later, under instructions from Delhi he travelled by a special chartered plane. He was met by the representatives of the Hyderabad Government at the airport. The Indian army units of Bolarum went out to the airport and presented him a guard of honour. The State Congress took out a few hundred of their volunteers to greet him. Munshi alighted from the plane and after the inspection of the guard of honour made a most curious speech. He reminded the forces of the heroic deeds of the Indian Army in the State of Junagadh which India had occupied a few days ago and told them that India expected from them similar heroism elsewhere when the time comes. He then drove to the Bolārum Residency and of course remained there as the guest of the Government of Hyderabad.

The Agent General of Hyderabad reached Delhi on the same day in accordance with the previous arrangements made with the Government of India. There was of course no one on behalf of the Indian Government to meet him. Later in the evening the Secretary of the Ministry of State called on him in an informal manner and expressed regret that his office had overlooked the fact that the Agent General of Hyderabad should have been received on the airport on behalf of the Government of India.

Late that night I lay in my bed reviewing the events of the past few days. Some of the events prior to World War II ran across my mind. I recollected the manner in which Hitler and the Hitlerite Germany had treated the representatives and head of the Czech Government before Hitler finally decided to occupy Czechoslovakia.

He and other Nazi leaders had declared that Czechoslovakia constituted a threat to the existence of Germany! "Bad Omen", I said to myself that I should think that way. I then fell asleep. I was too exhausted to think any longer.

CHAPTER XIII

MUNSHI—THE AGENT GENERAL

Close to the 'Bolarum Residency', the British had built a spacious building and named it the 'Deccan House'. It used to be the official residence of the Commander of the British troops and had the traditional grandeur and expanse about it. Munshi, after a few days' stay at the Bolarum Residency, chose to shift into the 'Deccan House'. He soon renamed it 'Dakshna Sadan'—a Sanskrit version of 'Deccan House'.

K. M. Munshi, a practising lawyer of repute of the Bombay High Court, had great political ambitions but had attained only limited success. His stock in the High Command of the All India Congress had undergone many vicissitudes and he was ever eager to build up a secure place for himself. His personal disposition was marked by an unusual combination of superiority and inferiority complexes. He claimed and presented himself as a 'Brahmin'—a high caste Hindu. Those who knew his background asserted that he was not qualified to that claim by birth. By nature, he was always known as intensely communal minded. He was given the assignment of securing the accession of Hyderabad to India by means other than armed invasion—a difficult job for which he was least suited temperamentally or politically.

Strictly speaking, the relationship between the British and Hyderabad was based on a number of treaties of alliance commencing from A.D. 1759. By tradition and in practice over generations, however, the British Crown had assumed suzerainty and their Crown Representative had exercised *de facto* paramountcy over the Nizam and the administration of Hyderabad. The British Cabinet, at the time of making over their ruling rights to India had made the definite promise that the "British Government" could not and will not in any circumstances transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government. It was an important constitutional undertaking vital to Hyderabad and had cleared the issue beyond any doubt. The Stand-still

Agreement between India and Hyderabad of November 1947 had further expressly provided that "nothing herein contained shall include or introduce Paramountcy functions or create any Paramountcy relationship". It was Munshi's struggle all along to break through these limitations. He always took cover of the proviso of the Stand-still Agreement which read "Until new agreements in the behalf are made, all agreements and administrative arrangements on the matters of common concern including External Affairs, Defence and Communications, which were existing between the Crown and the Nizam immediately before the 15th August 1947, shall, in so far as may be appropriate, continue as between the Dominion of India (or any part thereof) and the Nizam". He devoted himself to plodding through piles of old files and documents, some of them centuries old. He picked up instances and gave them most intricate legal interpretations in the hope that by doing so he would resolve in favour of India the burning political issues of the day. Great was his disappointment when he found that his elaborate expositions and delicate legal interpretations of the phraseology of old files made little impression on the rock of politics. He had previously made the unsuccessful attempt to quickly step into the shoes of the British Resident and exercise paramountcy. After these disappointments, he soon stooped down to less dignified conduct. At lower levels, he began to imitate and pose himself as the successor of the British Resident but the more he acted that way, lesser was the respect he commanded. At times he got weary and burst out into emotions; occasionally he showed off as an organizer of public affairs; yet, at times, he made a nuisance of himself by his awkward behaviours in the public. But all those gesticulations carried him no further.

Munshi suffered from one other serious handicap: he commanded little influence over those in power at Delhi. There were several occasions when after lengthy discussions at Hyderabad he proceeded with certain positive proposals to Delhi; each time Delhi turned them down flat. Greatly infuriated over this treatment, Munshi retaliated by undermining the few constructive measures that Delhi ever took. In each case it was Hyderabad's interest that suffered.

In the earlier stages Munshi made several attempts to have direct dealings with the Nizam and to counsel him the way the

British Resident did. Having failed in his attempts, I, as Prime Minister, was his next objective. On several occasions he indirectly conveyed to me that I could have the benefit of his advice in the administration of the State. He used to get greatly enraged when there was no response.

Frustrated by the attitude of Delhi and disappointed in the approaches he made to the Nizam and myself, Munshi focussed all his attention on the affairs of the Hyderabad State Congress. It was commonly said that the headquarters of the Hyderabad State Congress had shifted from the congested locality of the Sultan Bazar to the breezy heights of 'Dakshna Sadan' at Bolarum. He used to have day long meetings with certain of the State Congress leaders and became the main source of inspiration of all their subversive designs.

There used to be a stream of callers on Munshi from morning till night. He treated them well and lavishly. Strict rationing of gasoline in Hyderabad made no difference with him and his associates who made the fullest use of their diplomatic privilege and imported large quantities of petroleum and each of his visitors received more than sufficient supply to enable him to repeat his call. His lavish hospitality continued over quite a period. For a time, he went about with an air of pride and claimed that what he had failed to achieve with the Government, he had more than made good by his influence over the public. But, that illusion did not sustain for long. One by one, his ardent colleagues and listeners got wearied of his fruitless sermons and started avoiding him. Later, the only callers on him left were a handful of State Congress leaders of little or no public standing and those who had no other serious occupation. I was advised by the Hyderabad Agent General at Delhi that whatever be the activities of Munshi in Hyderabad, no one there was prepared to take notice of any constructive proposal from him. So, it became clear that Munshi in Hyderabad had only a negative role to play and was in no position to make any positive contribution. Most of the highly placed authorities in Delhi unreservedly frowned at the mention of his name and made no secret of their disappointment and disgust with him. For long Munshi appeared blind to this unpleasant reality. Mountbatten and Nehru had on more than one occasion expressed their intent to

replace him. High level personal politics, however, came in the way of the choice of his substitute and deferred the decision of his replacement from time to time. Thus, other causes were responsible for Munshi staying on as Agent General right to the end.

Usually, when Munshi set himself to achieve any objective, conventions and scruples did not stand in his way. A typical incident is worth recording here. Early in April of 1948, Monckton on behalf of Hyderabad was busy discussing the outstanding issues with Mountbatten and prospects were in sight of their coming to some understanding. Munshi was sore over the matter and could not tolerate a situation where a settlement could be arrived at without his being prominently in the picture. He therefore decided to torpedo the apparently hopeful negotiations in another manner. Now, as it happened, a representative of the London Times visited Hyderabad towards the end of March 1948 and seems to have requested Qasim Razvi to let him have a glimpse of some of the Razakars. Qasim Razvi, ever-ready to oblige anyone that would give publicity to his movement, arranged for the same afternoon in some private place, a small parade of a couple of hundred Razakars. This was on the 31st of March. At the end of the parade the Razakars dispersed and the representative of the London Times and Qasim Razvi with some of his colleagues had tea and spent the rest of the afternoon quietly by themselves. The number present at the tea was reported to be small and probably did not exceed a dozen. Nothing was heard of the incident and no newspaper or any news agency took notice or possibly even knew of it. On the 7th April, precisely the day on which Walter Monckton arrived in Delhi to resume his talks with Mountbatten, the Hindustan Times came out with a front page startling headline that a "Hyderabad Weapons Week" had been organised by the Razakars and produced a full text of a most obnoxious and aggravating speech as having been made by Qasim Razvi on 31st of March before a mass rally of Razakars. Most shameless remarks regarding the Hindus and Hindu religion were attributed to Qasim Razvi. The publication must have particularly stupified the representative of the London Times who had practically spent the whole of that day with Qasim Razvi and was present in Hyderabad for most part of that week without ever hearing

a word about any mass rally or any speech by Qasim Razvi. He had of course seen the small parade of the Razakars and had tea and talked over matters with Qasim Razvi and his friends for a long time, but there were no speeches made of any description. No one had ever heard of such a thing as a "Weapons Week". No other newspaper had any information or any news agency knowledge of any speech made by Qasim Razvi during that fortnight or of any movement like a "Weapons Week". Nevertheless, the publication in the Hindustan Times created a sensation in Delhi and naturally made everyone indignant and enraged over it. Mountbatten was furious. Monckton himself was very much embarrassed and felt completely demoralized after reading the publication. There was nothing more that he could do in the charged atmosphere at Delhi and forthwith he returned to Hyderabad. From the Airport, he drove straight to my residence and handed over the copy of the Hindustan Times for me to read. I could straight away see the object and guess the source of publication. Nevertheless, I had the matter very thoroughly checked up by the Intelligence Department and made direct enquiries from all the newspapers and news agencies. No one knew anything of any rally of Razakars or any speech made by Qasim Razvi. Monckton also in his own way satisfied himself fully that it was all a cooked up affair aimed only to torpedo his efforts. I, therefore, sent a most emphatic protest to Nehru over the publication of the false news deliberately and carefully planned to torpedo the projected discussions between Mountbatten and Monckton. It probably took sometime before Nehru and Patel felt convinced that it was so. Mountbatten himself personally checked upon the matter with the representative of the London Times before accepting that it was all a part of a malicious plot to blast the chances of any success of his negotiations. Few days later, I received the reply to my protest from Nehru but all that he said was that even if the particular publication was false, Qasim Razvi had on other occasions made speeches which had been very aggravating. Thus the matter ended but for the time being at least, all chances of any friendly negotiations between Delhi and Hyderabad faded away. The ingenious plot had been hatched under the roof of "Dakshna Sadan" and had succeeded. There was a triumphant smile on the face of

Munshi for many days after that.

The office of the Indian Agent General had kept Delhi well supplied with many fabricated stories and numerous exaggerated accounts of the happenings in Hyderabad. These despatches generally suited the patterns and plans of Delhi where everyone was only too eager to receive and make use of any such account. Munshi had definitely made up his mind—if settlement at a diplomatic level was not secured by him it should not be secured by any one else. The executives at Delhi were equally determined that whatever happens Munshi should not play a leading role. Despite the knowledge of these facts and the realization of the need to replace him, the Delhi overlords could not among themselves come to an agreement over his successor. They had strong personal likes and dislikes and each placed the choice of his favourite even above the issue at stake. Munshi, when he came to know of the wire pulling at Delhi lost no time in conveying to the leaders there that any attempt to remove him from his present office would be a personal challenge to him and he would equally hit them back hard by exposing their weaker points. He possessed the means to do what he said and the overlords of Delhi knew it well. Thus, circumstances favoured Munshi's continuation in his office despite the dislike of all. From now on, he went about with the theme that an armed conflict between India and Hyderabad had to come and the sooner it came the better. With the possible exception of Mountbatten, he chased everyone else at Delhi to agree to his view point, as also the ministers of the Provincial Governments of Bombay, Central Province and, to a lesser extent, of Madras, through his personal influence. One other great disappointment for Munshi was his failure to make anything out of the Hyderabad State Congress. His lavish entertainment and his still more lavish promises had invoked some response in the earlier stages. However, everyone soon found out that there was little substance in what he talked. The crowd of his admirers began to thin down and at the end there remained very few around him and still fewer who believed in him. To an average Hindu citizen of Hyderabad he no longer meant any thing at all.

Late one summer evening, after dinner, Munshi and I sat chatting on an elevated porch overlooking the spacious lawns of the Shah

Manzil. The more serious matters had already been discussed and the conversation had turned on lighter affairs but Munshi's vehemence and force of argument even on trivial matters continued unabated. I was feeling tired and was in no mood to argue any longer; so with a smile I told him that I felt like throwing him over the porch. Munshi quickly cast a glance over the hard pavement immediately below and thought I had planned some such serious business. Suddenly he grew pale and began to falter. With difficulty he uttered that he was frail and it was sinful for anyone to kill a Brahmin. I was surprised and felt very embarrassed. Any amount of laughter on my part and light hearted gestures did not seem to recompose him. Every few seconds he kept on turning his face and looking at the pavement below. It took him some minutes before he regained his composure and then in an uncertain tone asked my leave to go home. I escorted him to his car. His Military Secretary, a stout built officer, came out of one of the side rooms and joined him. Colour came back to Munshi's face only after his Secretary had joined him and then with a warm hand-shake he assured me that he would see me again soon!

CHAPTER XIV

GANDHIJI AND HIS ASSASSINATION

On the twenty-ninth of January 1948, it was one of those cold, dismal evenings that are typical of Delhi winter. A thick haze hung over the city and through the approach from Albuquerque road even the blazing lights of the Birla House looked pale and cheerless. I had driven there and arrived a minute or so before the appointed hour and was soon ushered in the large hall where the great sage, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly styled as Mahatama Gandhi, sat crossed leg on a soft cushion that was spread on the floor in one corner. He was surrounded by a number of people—men, women and children of all ages. After formal greetings I was asked by Gandhiji to squat close to him. He then signalled all others to depart. One by one they quickly and quietly strolled away into the adjoining rooms. The only person that remained behind besides the two of us was a middle aged lady that I was introduced to as Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur—a Minister of the Indian Cabinet. For a few minutes we talked over general matters and then Gandhiji asked me if I would like Raj Kumari to leave. I told him it made no difference with me and as far as I was concerned her presence was welcome. She then settled down and remained present throughout our conversation but never uttered a word.

The Mahatama expressed his great anxiety over the Hyderabad tangle and expressed an earnest desire to see it settled in an amicable manner. He wanted to know my side of the story as he already knew fully well the other side. I outlined briefly the view-point of the Nizam and of the Government of Hyderabad and told him that I was only too eager to see the tension released and a happier understanding established soon. He then said that in his opinion the greatest obstacles in the way of arriving at an understanding was that Hyderabad still continued on with the old form of Government while India had become a democratic state on the fifteenth of last August. I told him that the main difficulty in our way to change over to a fully democratic way of government was the unsettled state of affairs be-

tween India and Hyderabad. I told him that despite the signing of the Stand-still Agreement the gulf between India and Hyderabad did not appear narrowing. Gandhiji said that it was important both for the well-being of India and of Hyderabad that a frank and honest understanding should be arrived at early between the two. He thought that it was unfortunate that Hyderabad should have advanced the loan of two hundred million rupees to Pakistan. He referred to the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and added that at such a juncture India felt particularly annoyed by the action of Hyderabad which might otherwise have passed unnoticed. I admitted that it was extremely unfortunate that the transaction had come to light just at the time when India had decided to lodge its complaint before the United Nations against Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. He then dwelt for a long time over the internal situation in Hyderabad and wanted me to give him a definite answer if the Nizam was really prepared to part with his power and introduce early a more representative form of administration. I told Gandhiji that there was no doubt whatsoever about it; nevertheless the traditions and conditions of Hyderabad demanded a progressive change-over with special safeguards for the Muslim inhabitants of the State and that Hyderabad which had been for some seven hundred and more years the seat of Muslim culture and civilization in the South of India, could not be turned over-night into a Hindu state under the domination of New India. Gandhiji believed that not only such a change should be prevented but in the emerging picture of India, Hyderabad should be maintained as a permanent centre of Muslim traditions and culture. He dwelt for sometime over the theory that the forty million Muslims in India had to have some such seat to fulfil their instinctive aspirations. He said that it was vitally necessary for the majority community of India to make the Muslims feel that India was as much their homeland and thus secure their unflinching loyalty to the Union of India. He said that he knew there were certain prominent people who were opposed to his viewpoint and were creating difficulties in the way, but he felt certain that they were short-sighted and their opposition will have to be overcome. I drew his attention to the problem of the migration of Muslims from Indian Provinces into Hyderabad. He said that owing to the distur-

bances it was natural that some would want to migrate, but it was obvious that Hyderabad could not absorb any appreciable portion of the Muslim population of India. He then observed, after a long pause, that he felt there was serious danger of reaction against the Hindus of the State as more Muslims migrate into Hyderabad and urged upon me that I should prevent the development of any conditions which might lead to the migration of Hindus from Hyderabad. I emphatically assured Gandhiji that no one could ever think of turning out a single Hindu from the State and that the Nizam would be the last person to allow anything like that to happen.

The conversation then turned on to the ruthless massacre of minorities that occurred all over the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent soon after the partition, and its numerous recurrences that were still reported from various parts of India. I told Gandhiji that Muslims, in small numbers, spread all over the country, could never feel safe and secure and in my opinion the best solution might be to concentrate them in larger pockets. I also told him that the Muslims in Hyderabad would feel less apprehensive and more confident of themselves if their numerical position could be improved so as to make them a more effective minority. I further stated that the economic potential of Hyderabad could easily sustain double the Muslim population which incidentally would considerably relieve the stress of over-population in certain parts of South India. Gandhiji said he would like to give more thought to this matter and discuss it with me another time.

He then dwelt for a long time over the non-feasibility of Hyderabad acceding to Pakistan. He said geography, population economy and every other conceivable factor was against the union of Hyderabad with Pakistan and therefore the Nizam and I should make up our minds and give up the idea. I was a little surprised by the prolonged eloquence of Gandhiji over the issue. The other leaders of India may have entertained such apprehensions in their minds but had never come out with them so openly. I told Gandhiji that Hyderabad was not thinking in terms of accession to Pakistan. If Hyderabad wanted to accede to Pakistan it would have done so on the 15th August and would not have laboured so much to work out a formula of close association with India.

I did my best to ease the mind of Gandhiji on the issue of Hyderabad acceding to Pakistan. Whether he really felt convinced or not, I was not certain, but seemingly he was more at ease. He then elaborated the theory that the only stable terms of Indo-Hyderabad relations would be association with India in some suitably modified form of accession. At the same time, he was most emphatic that it was for Hyderabad to feel that way and enter into an arrangement voluntarily and not for India to force the issue in any manner. He strongly felt that it would be most unwise on the part of India to ever try to force the matter over Hyderabad. He then impressed upon me the importance of maintaining peace at any price and wanted me to give him a personal assurance that I would work towards that end. I told him unhesitatingly that I was for peace under all circumstances and that not unless India used force I would allow anything which might jeopardize peace. I also made it plain that I was not contemplating a completely free Hyderabad. I knew the limitations set on Hyderabad by geography and other factors; and as such was anxious to retain only a degree of independence for Hyderabad. I could not possibly agree to accession in any form as demanded by India. I also told him that basically if the numerical minority of the Muslims in Hyderabad could be increased that would pave the way, more than anything else, to bring about the kind of arrangement that he had in view. The Muslims in Hyderabad at present, I said, felt themselves an insecure minority and the only way of peacefully turning Hyderabad into a progressive and stable democracy would be to build up their numbers so that they form an effective minority. This could be achieved by allowing migration of Muslims into Hyderabad from the neighbouring provinces of the Indian Union. A step like that would permanently resolve the problem facing the Muslims in Hyderabad as well as others living particularly in the Southern Provinces of the Indian Union. I once again told Gandhiji that it was too obviously in Hyderabad's own interest to remain closely associated with India and India could possibly have no real grounds to entertain any apprehension or misgivings about the future conduct of Hyderabad. Gandhiji apparently took a serious note of my views and said that if there were any means by which a stable solution could be evolved he would not hesitate to try them

out. He offered to carefully examine my view points and wanted to further discuss them with me in the course of the following day or two. I conveyed to him my great appreciation of his helpful understanding and encouraging attitude.

Gandhiji, in the course of our conversation abruptly switched over to another topic. He told me that it was unfortunate that the feeling generally prevailed that Sardar Patel was ill-disposed towards Muslims. He said he knew it for a fact that this was not so and despite his own differences with Patel on certain issues he could definitely state that he was not ill-disposed towards the Muslims. He insisted upon me to believe in his statement and proceed on that hypothesis. I told him that I did not know Sardar Patel well enough personally and on my part had no reason to feel prejudiced towards him in any way.

The meeting finally ended with the understanding that after careful consideration of each other's view point we should meet again after two days. Little then it occurred to Gandhiji or to myself that much could happen during the next twenty-four hours not to make that meeting ever possible.

My colleagues and I attached considerable importance to my talks with Gandhiji. I had given them a full account of the various issues discussed and had the more important points noted down for future reference. They were hopeful that if Gandhiji really felt convinced and took the matter in his hand he would not only influence the view point of others but would even see that nothing unjust or unfair is done. The following day I had some brief memorandums prepared over the thesis for more important issues and looked forward to meet Gandhiji again. Of course, what the reaction of our meeting on other Indian leaders was I did not know. The Indian Press had reported our meeting prominently but had made no comments.

It was a little after six o'clock the following evening when deeply engrossed in my thoughts I was idly strolling over the lawns of the Nizam's Guest House. I was startled by the sudden rush of a member of my staff from the building in my direction. In a nervous and excited tone he conveyed to me that the radio had just announced that Mahatama Gandhi had been shot dead only a few minutes ago. I was stunned for a moment, then I made a dash to the radio myself—yes

the All-India Radio was repeatedly announcing the news. There was no mistake about it—the Mahatama had been assassinated. The one man who had done so much to achieve the freedom of India and had all his life stood like a rock for the right of his country-men, now lay dead! We all stood around the radio. The assassin was reported to be a young Indian; the radio did not say what community he belonged to. Someone among us expressed the earnest hope that the assassin would not be a Muslim. Another remarked that should he turn out to be a Muslim, by the following morning there would not be a living Muslim soul in the entire city of Delhi. The Agent General of Hyderabad quietly walked out and alerted the armed guard and posted them all round the Nizam's Guest House. A couple of Hindu members of my staff took leave to go round and find out more facts about the tragedy. All the rest sat around the radio which kept repeating in a shrill voice at short intervals that "Mahatama Gandhi is assassinated", "Mahatama Gandhi is assassinated"!

Later on, it was announced that the Prime Minister Jawaherlal Nehru and the Deputy Prime Minister Vallabbhai Patel would soon be on the air. Nehru spoke in a broken voice with sobs in-between. He described how Gandhiji had been shot and what a loss the country had suffered but said nothing as to who the assassin was. Some twenty minutes later Patel spoke and one of the first things he announced was that the assassin was a Hindu. The disclosure in no way minimized the grief but indeed removed a great nervous tension. Thank God, we said, Delhi was saved from another blood bath.

There were far too many police restrictions that night to make it possible for anyone to visit the site of the tragedy—Birla House. The following morning we all went to pay homage to the frail body left behind of the great soul that had departed. By mid-day the funeral procession started and gathered volume as it proceeded along the long route to the cremation ground along the banks of the Jamna. I was deeply sad at heart as I watched the procession move.

Yes, a great soul had departed. I also developed the feeling that there was little chance now of any really honourable and far-sighted solution of the Hyderabad tangle. Subsequent events proved that my misgivings were not unfounded. Higher principles and nobler ideals

are professed by many but there are few who under all events observe them in practice. I knew that Gandhiji's teachings would be vainly preached by many but there would be very few who would resist the temptation of the misuse of the newly-acquired material power. I knew they would all simply set aside the professed spiritual doctrines when the hour of trial comes.

There were already indications for some time before the death of Gandhiji, of some of his powerful disciples breaking away from him and pulling their weight in the opposite direction. His other more ardent followers were gradually receding into the background. Perhaps in a way it was a good thing that Gandhiji passed away at the height of his glory. Maybe after some time the dissenting factors would have proved a source of real heartache to him and might have brought very unhappy days to him.

CHAPTER XV

INDIA AND PROBLEMS OF HYDERABAD

Not until the partition of India was finally decided upon did Hyderabad believe that it was going to come about. When it did, it was felt that a very formidable size of the minorities, both Hindu and Muslim, had come to the lot of Pakistan and India which in itself was a sufficient guarantee of their protection in the respective countries. As such, the best course for Hyderabad was to wait and see before plunging into the dark and taking an irrevocable decision. The instinctive desire to remain a free people, of all those that belonged to Hyderabad, was strong. They were at the same time conscious of the fact that after the merciless dismemberment of its vital wings by the not very far-sighted policy of some of the British rulers in India, Hyderabad was left in such a position that unless it fully collaborated with India it could not survive. To this extent, there was almost unanimity in the outlook of both Hindu and Muslim inhabitants of the State. But, the events that followed the partition of India started deepening the surface cracks of the composite Hindu-Muslim society of Hyderabad. The horrors suffered by the minorities in both the newly formed Dominions greatly affected the minds of both the communities in the State and their differences which had so far been more academic and sporadic, began to take a more serious turn. The Muslim minorities had never before thought themselves at any particular disadvantage on account of their numerical inferiority and indeed, to some extent, regarded themselves in a privileged position being the co-religionists of the Ruler. Now, they began to feel that in case Hyderabad acceded to India, theirs would be a very unenviable lot under the domination of the Indian Government. In addition to the fear of the loss of their political power, they had a very genuine anxiety as to their economic future. A large number of Muslims earned their livelihood as government employees, specially in the urban areas. If they lost that venue they had no immediate alternative source of employment in view. Land, commerce, banking, industries and rural administration

were principally in the hands of the Hindus and experience had shown that in any organization owned or operated by the Hindus, the Muslims found little chance of employment. The working of the Provincial Autonomy in undivided India in the previous years had proved that wherever the Hindu majority community came into power the treatment meted out by them to the minority communities was most prejudicial. The reaction of the Muslims in Hyderabad, therefore, to the issue of accession to India was not only one of intense dislike but was strongly hostile. There was no question of Hyderabad acceding to Pakistan either. It was realized full well that despite the right constitutionally provided to the Ruler, it was neither feasible nor desirable for Hyderabad to accede to Pakistan. The unanimous choice of Muslims and of great many Hindus under the circumstances was to get into association with India but basically maintain their freedom and separate entity to the extent practicable. The Nizam himself was intent on remaining free but knowing that his country was geographically surrounded on all sides by India, had prepared himself to compromise his sovereignty and transfer to India certain of his sovereign rights. As a shrewd and practical man he was eager to come to some reasonable arrangement with the Indian Union outside the fold of accession. One thing they all believed—the Nizam, the Hindus and the Muslims—that if Hyderabad once went into the fold of accession, they would all be at the mercy of the Indian rulers for ever after.

Historically, whether under the Hindu or Muslim rulers, Hyderabad had remained an independent kingdom except for comparatively brief periods—once in the time of Asoka and many centuries later, under the Moghul Emperors and finally, for almost a hundred years, as a part of the British Empire. The average Hindu in Hyderabad was as much freedom loving as anyone else. Through centuries of closely integrated association the Nizams, even though Muslims, were never considered as aliens by the Hindus. An average Hindu's association with his co-religionists in the rest of India, with the exception of those living in the bordering areas, was very little indeed. As a rule, he took a positive pride in his citizenship of Hyderabad. The intelligentia and the vested interests of the Hindu community were alive to the fact that any political Union with India would subject them all to

the predominating and powerful political, financial and economic interests of India and their own role in their own land would be a very secondary one. Nevertheless, a large section of the enlightened and educated Hindu community was sore over the preponderance of Muslims in the higher Government services and very rightly wanted its proper share in the administration of the State. It was only from this discontented section that the Hyderabad State Congress and other Hindu political organizations drew their support. However, the experience of the common man with Hindu administrative officers had not often been pleasant and his response therefore to the call of political organizations on communal plank was invariably poor. It was this unfavourable frame of mind of the masses that greatly limited the success of the activities and agitations of the Hindu political institutions in Hyderabad.

Under frustration, the leaders of these organizations, even long before the Independence of India, turned their eyes for help and guidance from time to time to the more successful Indian political organizations, notably the All India Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. These organizations were ever only too eager to extend their field of activity and ambit of influence. At times, under their guidance and on some occasions with their active collaboration, the local leaders launched movements parallel to those in British India but in the absence of similar circumstances and any deep rooted discontent there was a complete lack of response from the masses. Heavy finances and a large number of trained volunteers from India did not help to advance such movements very much. The generous help of the leaders and organizations of India was not motivated by any instinctive sympathy but was only extended as a part of their broader policy. From their point of view, the continuance of an effective Muslim ruler over a largely Hindu populated territory was ethically and culturally undesirable. They also knew that the existing economic structure of the State was sound and both nature and tradition had provided it the potentiality of developing much faster than most parts of India. It was surplus in food, a feature uncommon to most parts of the subcontinent. Leaving such a territory under the rule of a Muslim Nizam meant a major material disadvantage. The State provided better liv-

ing conditions not only for its present inhabitants including Muslims, but also held out the prospect of a welcome home to Muslims residing in other predominantly Hindu populated parts of India. In addition, Hyderabad had valuable exportable commodities such as cotton, oilseeds, sugar, coal, gold and many other processed and semi-processed articles from indigenous raw materials. Many of these commodities were important for earning foreign exchange in the end. The Indian leaders further detested the facts that the Hindus in Hyderabad were self-centred and had a culture and back-ground that had to an extent been influenced by the Muslim thoughts and ways of living. All these political, social and economic contrasts between India and Hyderabad, they felt, could only be eliminated if Hyderabad were to be completely absorbed and closely knit into the general pattern of the future India. From their point of view the sooner that was done, the better.

Almost till the middle of 1947 few Muslims and certainly no Hindus believed that India would be divided. The ultimate decision of the partition of the country was only accepted by the Congress leaders as a necessary evil. It gave them all a very rude mental shock. The Western and Eastern wings of what used to be British India had been clipped off to constitute the new country of Pakistan. The Independence Act of India had provided that the (Indian) States may choose for themselves to join India or Pakistan or to remain independent at their will. With this decision, there arose a genuine fear on the part of the Congress leaders that unless timely and effective action was taken, Hyderabad might eventually turn into a southern wing of Pakistan. The possibility of the Nizam choosing to remain independent, from their point of view, was equally dangerous. Even after the partition, there were left behind in the Dominion of India as many as forty-five million Muslims. To allow the Nizam to remain independent, they believed, would constitute a very material and serious source of inspiration to those Muslims and would perpetuate the Muslim culture and defy all plans of progressivley absorbing the Indian Muslims in the social and cultural fold of the Hindus. The issue of Hyderabad, therefore, had every seriousness from the point of view of the Indian leaders and they were least prepared to take any chances. There was no special secret made of these view points either; they were manifest

from their writings, speeches, pronouncements, and the activities of the All India Congress were secretly as well as openly directed towards annihilation of the existing structure of Hyderabad.

The division of India and the announcement of the Boundary Commissions Award soon proved by the events that followed that the apprehensions on the part of the minorities were very real. It is not easy to say now as to who fired the first shot and it is not easy either to apportion the blame for the atrocities that took place on either side of the border as each one in turn unreservedly places the entire blame on the other. The mass massacre of the Muslims that occurred at Delhi, the capital of India, under the very nose of its central Government, was witnessed by the representatives of all countries present there and shocked the world opinion, but that was only a fraction of what had happened in the interior. Those who were nearer the borders had at least the chance of running across to save their lives. Others, living further away from the borders, as a great many Muslims and Hindus did, had even that chance denied to them. The tales of atrocities committed against their fellow religionists in the other Dominion had spread like wild fire in every nook and corner of both India and Pakistan and had aggravated the feelings against the respective minorities. Then, there were seekers of opportunity and as many *ame de boue* on both sides who were prepared to add more fuel to the raging fires. A large number of the Muslims came to be subjected to untold miseries not only in East Punjab and West Bengal but all over the great span of the Dominion of India. There was also a section of the Hindu leaders who openly professed that their aim was to cleanse their now 'free' homeland of all those who were not 'Hindus' or could not eventually be absorbed in the 'Hindu' fold. The situation across the border for the Hindus was no less trying. It would be only fair to say that both the Governments of India and Pakistan did their best, later, to improve matters but before the situation could in any way be brought under control, human blood had mercilessly been shed to an extent beyond all imagination. Abduction of women and children, compulsory conversion of faith and loss of property that took place was of an unparalleled magnitude. The sense of nervousness and insecurity that prevailed even in the relatively quiet areas surpassed the

wildest of imagination.

During the turmoil, to a good many Southern and Central Indian Muslims, Hyderabad appeared as the only sanctuary within reach where their life and honour could be safe. Mass migration of Muslims started into the State. Such was the intensity of the influx that in the last quarter only of 1947 almost a million Muslims had crossed over the border and entered the State by various routes. It had become almost impossible for the administrative machinery of the State to cope with such numbers. An official representation to the Governments of the surrounding Provinces of India to prevent the influx brought only poor response. Very soon all the urban and many rural areas in the State were seething with refugees. After some time however it dawned upon Indian leaders that despite the apparent advantage of getting their Provinces rid of the Muslims, their concentration in Hyderabad might seriously upset the communal ratio there and give rise to more serious problems. One immediate possibility apprehended was that of the reaction against the Hindu inhabitants of the State and of their getting squeezed out of their own home lands. Actually, in some places such reactions were manifest. In a few cases the Hindus of the State feared that the conditions might worsen and before that happened decided to migrate into the Indian Union. These events demanded quick thinking and a reversal of policy on the part of the leaders of the All India Congress.

A total lack of understanding and appreciation of the outlook and minds of the Hindu population of Hyderabad by the Indian leaders was a very significant feature. It was on this account that they had faced failure time after time. Despite their propping up the Hyderabad State Congress in every conceivable manner, that organization had done little that could be regarded of any use. All that they could make the State Congress do was to pass two formal resolutions, one for accession to India and the other for responsible government—and no more. On the other hand even the more advanced sections of the Hindu population of the State felt that while there was much to be gained by responsible government, there was a lot more that would be lost if the State acceded to the Union of India. The argument that unless Hyderabad joined the Union there was no hope of responsible

Government in the State cut no ice with them. So, in spite of the formal resolutions of the Hyderabad State Congress on accession and responsible government, there was little enthusiasm apparent in the Hindu intelligentia and hardly any support coming from the masses. These facts were very disappointing to the leaders of the Indian Union and they felt convinced that the only solution was to force Hyderabad straight into accession.

This rapidly hardening outlook of India was getting more and more apparent to the Nizam and the people of Hyderabad. Even long before the 15th of August, the day on which India officially received its independence, the All India Congress leaders by careful underhand machinations had effectively prevented the normal flow of essential goods into Hyderabad. Soon after their assuming formal power, an effective embargo was applied on the movement of all the essential materials. Large consignments of goods from overseas destined for Hyderabad were piling up at the Indian ports and a great volume of goods was held over on the Indian Railways and roads on their side of the borders. This was a serious matter for land-locked Hyderabad. In the earlier stages the blockade was not officially announced or admitted and occasionally a few things used to trickle in but very soon these leakages were sealed off and the blockade made completely watertight. Along with that, the lawless elements at the borders were provided with modern weapons and under professional direction encouraged to infiltrate into the State and do as much damage as possible to public and private property. In the surrounding Indian territory, large training centres for gorilla warfare were established in many places and were provided with ample finances and plentiful modern weapons. These movements, at first secretly directed, were now openly conducted under the patronage of the Central and the Provincial Government authorities. The raids were systematically planned and engineered and were conducted under the command of trained army personnel. The press, the radio and every other means of publicity was fully geared up to stir the feelings all over India against Hyderabad. By adopting these measures, the Government of India felt certain that it would be only a matter of days before the administrative machinery of the State collapsed and internal revolts

and risings force the hands of the Nizam and his government into submission to India.

In this strange world that we live, things do not always move along; even the most carefully planned lines and the best of plans are at times upset by the least anticipated events. That is precisely what happened with the political plans of India in relation to Hyderabad. The war of nerves, the blockade, the border incidents and the all out propaganda had their effect but quite the opposite way to what the Indian leaders had expected. The border raids of which the Muslim residents and their property was the principal target and internal disturbances engineered and conducted with similar objects only helped to arouse the Muslims and resulted in the overnight growth of the much publicised Razakar movement. The events, however, considerably embittered the communal feelings in the State and upset the communal harmony to a degree that had never been experienced before. There were, at the same time, believers in Marxism who in the resulting confusion saw a promising field for spreading discontent and disorder. The activities of these elements did not remain confined to the borders of Hyderabad only. They soon found out that a more fertile and receptive soil lay in the adjoining Indian territories. The fire that had been so zealously fanned to disintegrate Hyderabad very soon turned its direction and started spreading into the adjoining districts of Bombay and Madras. Before long it was noticed that the law and order situation particularly in those two provinces had begun to deteriorate rapidly.

The people of Hyderabad, irrespective of caste or community, began to face the blockade with a determination and resourcefulness that surpassed all expectations. Local improvisations were meeting most of the needs of life; and severe rationing of all articles was working out smoothly and was cheerfully borne by the populace. Unlike all previous experiences there was no shooting up of prices nor were there many instances of hoarding. If any article was in short supply, there was hardly a merchant who tried to conceal it or sell it at abnormal prices. If any essential article was not to be found in the market, the customer hardly showed any sign of anger or disappointment. All these events were being very carefully noted both by the

official and non-official observers of India present in Hyderabad. They could see that there were no indications of any early collapse of the economic or the social structure of the State. The Hindu population, despite all propaganda from the Indian Union, did not show any sign of restlessness or revolt. At a later stage, it even became doubtful if they would vote for accession to India if a free plebiscite were to be held under the aegis of neutral and independent observers. The State Congress, after passing their two resolutions, one favouring accession to India and the other demanding responsible government early, had chosen to sit behind and watch and no amount of external pressure could persuade its leaders to launch an appeal to the masses to support the resolution. With these unexpected developments the plans envisaged by India had necessarily to be changed. The problem of Hyderabad needed a different approach if the objective of India had to be gained; or possibly a modification of the objective itself might become necessary.

That is how the minds of the Indian leaders were working. Their zeal and enthusiasm was constantly being fed by a volume of grossly exaggerated and extensively fabricated reports from the Indian Agent General at Hyderabad and a mass of unfounded stories and colourful literature appearing day after day in the Congress inspired press of India. The leading role in the press campaign was taken by the 'Hindustan Times' of Delhi and the 'Express' of Bombay. Other papers, who were moderate in their views or had not associated themselves with the campaign, were seriously reprimanded by the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of States at Delhi. The All India Radio each day, gave a further lead to the campaign. As a result of this persistent propaganda, a large number of foreign newspapers' representatives and correspondents poured into Hyderabad to see things for themselves. They came on the scene individually and in batches. The only courtesy extended to them by the State was to furnish them with a road map and gasoline for their automobile. They were free to roam about the entire territory and go where and how they liked. Some took special pains to visit the most out of the way places. After exhaustive tours they went back, disappointed, in a way, that they could find nothing extraordinary or unusual. Every one in the

cities and villages, on the farms and in the factories, on the railways and the highways and the byways, seemed to go about his daily routine of life in the usual way. Only the extreme bordering areas appeared to them completely deserted!

CHAPTER XVI

WITH THE LORD AND OVERLORDS AT DELHI

Prior to my meeting Gandhiji at Delhi I had called upon Sardar Vallabbhai Patel and had an informal talk with him. During the course of our conversation Patel avoided discussing any of the current problems relating to Hyderabad. He, however, made it clear that he was never for the Stand-still Agreement and knew before it was signed that it was doomed to failure. He had said so to all concerned but, at the insistence of the Governor General, Lord Mountbatten, he said, and some other colleagues of his, he had allowed it to go through only for their satisfaction, knowing full well that it would never work. Now that the agreement had been concluded, its ill-effects were becoming manifest. He, however, did not want to interfere yet in any way and had for the time being left the matters in the hands of Mountbatten and wanted him and his other colleagues to deal with the situation. He would only step in after the others confess their failure and come to him for rescue. For the present, therefore, any talks and negotiations in the matter I should only have with Mountabatten in whom, Patel remarked sarcastically, the Nizam appeared to repose greater faith, forgetting that it would not be Mountbatten but the leaders of the Indian Union whom the Nizam would eventually have to contend. But, I protested, Mountbatten was dealing with the subject on behalf of India as a full-fledged Governor General and on no account at our instance. Why should then Hyderabad be blamed for it? He said he was not blaming Hyderabad or anyone else for that but the fact remained that the Nizam wanted very much that the Indo-Hyderabad relationship should be fixed up by Mountbatten, because he had greater faith in Britishers than the people or leaders of India. He then added with greater sarcasm that we people did not seem to realise that the Governor General dare not do a thing without the express consent and the approval of himself and the Indian Cabinet. He reminded me that India was now a free country and that the Governor General was only a servant of the Cabinet and could only

act as a mouthpiece when ordered to do so. I was a little taken aback by the trend of the conversation and told him it was unfair to Hyderabad that the Indian leaders should entertain such feelings and yet have the negotiations conducted by Mountbatten. Patel retorted that it was for the Nizam to answer that question and not for him.

I left Patel with a very uncomfortable feeling and found myself completely baffled. In one breath Patel had said that he had left the issue of Hyderabad to be dealt by the Governor General and his other colleagues and was not going to interfere till such time that they had failed and had yet very clearly stated that Mountbatten dared not do a thing without his own consent. What was the line that Patel was following? He appeared so certain of the failure of all the talks and yet allowed the negotiations to go on. Was he planning first to bring about a failure and then arrogate to himself the rather unfair credit of having solved the issue which others had failed to resolve? Could I tell Mountbatten and Nehru of this conversation and if so how and to what purpose? The matter was delicate and my grave concern over it was only natural as the fate of Hyderabad seemed to hang over these negotiations. The situation was both puzzling and depressing.

I had a long conversation with Mountbatten the evening following the assassination of Gandhiji. He had just returned from the funeral and was covered with dust from head to foot after a long day out at the cremation grounds on the bank of Jumna under a burning sun. He hardly appeared composed enough to discuss vital matters affecting the lives of millions, so I suggested that our talks may as well be put off for the following day. He did not agree and insisted that we should go on as time was precious. During the course of the conversation I tried to gauge how far he could act on his own initiative and discretion. To a direct question I put to him, he very emphatically replied that although his position as a constitutional Governor General was obvious he had sought special powers from the Indian Cabinet to deal with the Hyderabad issue in view of the Nizam's past association with the British and his being their Faithful Ally, and out of personal consideration to Mountbatten, the Indian Government had vested him with such powers. Later, however, he turned out to be completely

ineffective in accommodating even the most simple and reasonable view-points of Hyderabad. Each time that he found himself cornered during negotiations and could no longer logically hold the ground, he put up the innocent plea that as a constitutional Governor General he could only act in accordance with the instructions of the Indian Cabinet. He was in a painfully irresponsible position which could hardly be regarded as honest or fair. I felt that it would be much easier to deal with a party in the negotiations who fully represented the opposite side. With Mountbatten there, whenever it was an issue of Hyderabad having to give in, he was all friend and well wisher of Hyderabad and of the Nizam and as such at least morally privileged to advise the Nizam to yield. When it came to the other side, having to accommodate in any way, purely on the score of reason and right, he, of course, was the constitutional Governor General and as such helpless to do anything beyond the mandate of his Government. What I never could understand was why a person of Mountbatten's position had volunteered himself to play such a humiliating role. Neither his own personal position nor the prestige of the people he represented warranted such an undignified and dishonourable role. This disposition of Mountbatten, not unnaturally, had given rise to all kinds of speculations and rumours in and outside India which would be *adnausea* to record.

In retaining Lord Mountbatten as the first head of the free Indian Government the Indian leaders must have obviously had some object in view. To say that Mountbatten was so popular with them that they wanted him personally as their first Governor General, is too obviously absurd to be taken seriously. Even after the British had gone for good the Indian leaders never refrained from attributing the results of their own misdeeds and failures to what they persistently described as the cursed British rule. Mountbatten had remained associated with India for only a short period before the country achieved its independence, and the Indian leaders were not of a stuff to deal with the issue of the Governor Generalship so casually—particularly when the sister Dominion Pakistan had chosen Jinnah as its Governor General. One of their very definite and positive objects in maintaining Mountbatten at the head of their government was to make use of him in deal-

ing with the large number of Indian Rulers. From their point of view, Mountbatten was admirably suited for the purpose. He had been for some time the Crown Representative on behalf of the British—the institution set by the British to sway over all the Indian States. That background coupled with the theatrical gestures which Mountbatten amply possessed, was calculated to inspire all the awe necessary to bring the Indian States smoothly under the subjugation of the new set up at Delhi. From this point of view, his appointment as Governor General was a master-piece of the statesmanship of the Indian leaders and by the results achieved, their expectations were more than fulfilled. Mountbatten *advocatus diaboli* adopted every means fair or foul to rope in the Ruling Princes who might otherwise have given a very sore time to the leaders of India. On one occasion, in a meeting of the ministers of various States, one minister, it is said, had expressed his inability to accept the terms of Accession to India without referring to the ruler who at the time happened to be in the U.S.A. Dramatically, Mountbatten pulled the large glass paper weight on the table in front of him and started gazing into it. A few seconds later he burst out and shouted that he was seeing the particular ruler in a suite at the Waldorf Astoria and that he was telling him that his own and the interests of the States were being well served by Mountbatten and that his Minister should hesitate no longer in accepting the terms of accession. He then turned round and declared that the particular State had now agreed to the terms and made so much noise and created such a din that the minister had no opportunity to say a word. The unfortunate minister probably recorded his disagreement later, but the paper must have found its way straight to the waste paper basket like many other important documents of those days. After everything was over the State probably felt that it was in too weak a position to fight the battle any longer and there the chapter closed.

The Indian leaders were well compensated for the loss of their national prestige in retaining Mountbatten; he indeed served their object very well at the sacrifice of his own dignity and the dignity of the people to which he belonged. What could be the purpose of Mountbatten choosing to stoop down to such low levels? He knew very well that he was in India barely for a few months, so there could

be no question of his retaining that job of comfort and prestige for any appreciable length of time. He was not serving any definite cause of his own country in any way and therefore he was not undergoing all that humiliation for any patriotic aim. In fact, by his stooping so low, he was considerably damaging the prestige of the British before the eyes of the Indians who had now been more and more convinced that Britain had been reduced to a third class power. He could not be working for any humanitarian ends or for the pure love of work, as a good many of his deeds did not come up to the conventional standards of sympathy for humanity. What then could be his object? His attitude remains a mystery. There has been a good deal of guessing by many, including some of his own countrymen, over this issue.

After the first few meetings with Mountbatten I felt that from the point of view of Hyderabad it would have been much better if the negotiations had gone on directly with the Indian leaders than with Mountbatten. In dealing with Mountbatten there was complete lack of realism in addition to the absence of definiteness and finality. It was also apparent that whatever be the motive that made him play the role he did, he was not very happy nor personally at ease. For one thing, he was kept all the time under the constant and watchful eyes of V.P. Menon, whose duty it was to see that Mountbatten did not in any way deviate from the line laid down by Patel. If in the heat of discussion Mountbatten ever went off the track, Menon very firmly placed him back on the rails, quite often causing a fair amount of embarrassment to Mountbatten as well as to others present.

All Menons come from Travancore (south India) and there are any number of them in almost every nook and corner of the administration at Delhi from the lowest to the highest position. It is commonly said that the central administration of India suffers from "MENONgites". In the period following the independence, by far the most important of the Menons was V.P. He was popularly referred to by his initials only and was the Secretary of the State Department and was one of the most trusted lieutenants of Patel. He had risen from ranks and with perfect ease could rise as high or as low as the situation on hand demanded. He did not have a very strong educational background and, on his own, could not produce a ten line draft

worthy of any consideration. He yet possessed a very clear head and was good at manoeuvring things the way his masters wanted. One could never say when he was speaking the truth or otherwise. He did not mind in the least, if it was directly pointed out to him, that a certain statement made by him had turned out to be false. He could always take any such remark good humouredly and could easily laugh it away. He had the unabating patience of repeating the same thing over and over again and believed that he had been original each time. He could act in a very natural manner on all occasions and could ward off any difficult situation by a ready YES without meaning anything at all.

V.P. was a sociable person and had a charming, unassuming and a typically eastern wife. He was usually clad in unorthodox European type of clothing and possessed an unusual capacity for real Scotch and good wines at all times of day and night without ever showing any ill-effects for it. He boasted that was the only thing where he had not submitted to the wishes of his masters; for everything else, right or wrong, he was a willing servant. After the independence of India, both at his office and home, there used to be hanging around him a number of their Highnesses-remnants of British imperialism. They all appeared eager to receive a smile from him and he rarely denied them the pleasure. V.P. took special delight in giving them appointments at all odd hours but the ruling Princes did not mind that and considered themselves fortunate if the appointment sought was not refused. They were always anxious to demonstrate to him their traditional generosity and were often given the opportunity. After their interviews with V.P. they invariably returned happy for having secured a "yes" to almost everything they asked, only to be disillusioned later that the YES had been as easily forgotten as it had been said. With the representatives of Hyderabad, V.P. was different. As a rule, although with them also he would say "yes" to many things but implement none. For instance, the Agent General of Hyderabad or his Secretary might be calling at his office to record a complaint that the supplies of petrol to Hyderabad had been suspended under the orders of one or the other Provincial government or some other authority. V. P. Menon would frown at it and say it was a very foolish thing to do. He would then reach the telephone and tell the concerned authorities

in the presence of the representative of Hyderabad that the action was unwarranted and that they should immediately rectify the matter. He would even argue on the phone that any such step on their part would be a violation of the terms of the Stand-still Agreement. After a cordial shake-hand and thanks, by the time the poor representative reached the person so advised on phone for further action, V.P.'s second telephone would have reached him to take no action on his previous message. This was quite a normal mode of procedure of the Ministry of State. Only occasionally, the authority at the other end of the phone would get so exasperated as to profess the whole truth out of sheer disgust.

The conferences between the Governor General of India and other Ministers of the Indian Union and the delegations from Hyderabad, were invariably preceded by an interview with V.P. Most of these delegations, after the Stand-still Agreement, were headed by me and each time the negotiations commenced with a first round with V.P. It was V.P.'s task to sound and gauge the minds of the Hyderabad's representatives and duly advise his masters in advance. At the same time, he would draw up, before the Hyderabad delegates, a grotesque picture of the situation at Delhi and say how exasperated everyone was getting by Hyderabad still not deciding to accede to India. He claimed each time for himself and for Mountbatten and, occasionally, for Nehru, the credit for holding the balance which would have otherwise been upset by Patel. According to him, the public opinion was in favour of immediate breakdown of the negotiations and a more drastic action. He would then, in confidence, impart the general trend of the minds of Patel and other leaders of the Indian Union. Curiously enough, precisely the same theme would appear almost word for word the following day in the Hindustan Times! That was the urge of the public opinion under which the leaders of the Indian Union were obliged to act! On the political stage it all appeared a cheap pantomime show.

Another important duty assigned to V.P. was the non-implementation of all the points agreed during the course of these conferences. It was also his task to make sure that none of the terms settled were, by any possible oversight, observed. Thus, when an understanding was

reached over certain major financial issues between the representatives of Hyderabad and the Government of India at Ministerial level, V.P. rushed about and had the whole matter shelved into cold storage. Similarly, when the Defence Department in their usual course stated that they could immediately spare certain arms and ammunition needed by Hyderabad as agreed to in the conferences, V.P. acted quickly and made the Department withdraw the offer. That Department, out of sheer disgust at this way of dealing, sent on one occasion an open telegram to the concerned Hyderabad army authorities that under telephonic instructions from the State Ministry at Delhi, it was obliged at the last minute to withhold the supplies to which it had previously agreed.

As Prime Minister, Nehru only occasionally took direct part in the Indo-Hyderabad negotiations. He was, of course, always readily available for a discussion. So, we got together a few times. Everyone of our talks was preceded by a comprehensive survey by Nehru of the world situation on a highly philosophic level. I do not remember any occasion when the mention of atomic energy was not made and its profound effects on human civilisation. Invariably, he would also describe at length the theory of human emotions, individual and collective, and the shape they take when checked or allowed to run in certain channels. He would switch over to the smallness of the world and how it had shrunk owing to long distance high speed jet and other types of aeroplanes. Nehru has a notion that he is a prophet of some sort and can foresee the developments that are to come in the social, psychological and scientific realms of human life. While he is impressive at times in his views on the social and psychological aspects of human life, he completely bores his listeners by a thoroughly unintelligent exposition of his rather mixed-up ideas of the more scientific subjects.

Discussions with Nehru on the Indo-Hyderabad problems preceded, of course, by a survey of a good many irrelevant subjects, always ended with his conclusion that, in modern world, Hyderabad's desire to remain independent was both unnatural and untenable. I often argued with him that if that be the case, why not let the natural forces operate and influence and shape the future of Hyderabad and deter-

mine the Indo-Hyderabad relations, instead of forcing the issue now. The only answer that Nehru could produce was that in what he considered a dynamic India, since after its freedom had been attained, no slow progress could be accommodated. On one occasion I sarcastically told the Pandit that the dynamism was still in theory and it would be a long time before it could effectively come into practice. From the point of view of Hyderabad I added that I would like to follow its present path which had placed Hyderabad socially and economically ahead of most parts of India, at least until such time that the professed dynamism had transformed India and placed it ahead of Hyderabad. Somewhat agitated, Nehru then came out that for the social and economic development of India integration of Hyderabad was necessary and unless that was brought about by negotiations India will have to use force to secure its objective. At that time it was not the usual gentle Nehru speaking but the Nehru possessed of the desire of conquest and conscious of the military might inherited from the British.

That is how the three personalities—Mountbatten, Nehru and Menon—figured all the time in the Indo-Hyderabad relations, with Patel lurking in the background but shadowing them all effectively. Some eight hundred miles south Munshi—India's Agent General at Hyderabad, was impatiently roasting himself in jealousy and anger towards Delhi, for ill-treating him and not giving him his due share of importance, and against Hyderabad, for remaining stubborn in spite of his unpolished diplomatic approaches. When he agreed to serve as the Agent General, he had hoped to achieve over Hyderabad an easy political victory which would place his stock above that of his rivals in the field of Indian politics. When that hope faded away, he busied himself with tactics of a much lower order.

There were many honest and dignified elements, both among officials as well as outside, who looked down upon the machinations that were going on against Hyderabad and in no uncertain terms expressed their disgust and indignation towards the attitude and behaviour of the leaders of India; but they were not in a position to do anything more. There were also numberless rulers of the Indian States who had been suffering continual indignities and insults from the overlords of Delhi. They constantly, though secretly, expressed their admiration

for Hyderabad on the stand taken and hoped and wished that Hyderabad would in the end succeed. Almost the entire corps of foreign diplomats at Delhi had their fullest sympathy for the cause of Hyderabad and unreservedly expressed their feelings, with the possible exception of the British High Commissioner and his staff!

Though the Government-inspired Congress press in India was continuously pouring out venom against Hyderabad, there were several non-party and independent newspapers in India who, even at the risk of the displeasure of the Government, condemned the policy and supported the stand of Hyderabad as just and fair. And, almost the entire foreign press represented in India was for the just cause of Hyderabad and was extremely indignant at the behaviour of the Indian Government. They were all sending such outspoken and frank accounts to their respective papers that the Government of India on more than one occasion had to impose ban or censorship on the messages leaving India relating to Hyderabad. The despatches to the London Times, The Telegraph, The New York Times, The New York Herald Tribune and other papers served by the United Press of America had particularly annoyed the Government of India. Special censorship was also imposed on the despatches to other widely circulating publications such as the Life and Time and many other American and British periodicals and weeklies.

That is how the stage was being set at Delhi to decide the fate of Hyderabad. Most of the spectators knew that the overwhelming might will win over the right and that India would establish itself in Hyderabad by force. There were a few who yet believed that the leaders of India would in the end submit to moral force. With the exception of the extremist and die-hard section of the Congressites and other communal organisations, most public bodies felt deep sympathy for the cause of Hyderabad.

CHAPTER XVII

REPERCUSSIONS WITHIN

The meetings of early February 1948 at Delhi between the Leaders of India and of Hyderabad were mostly inconclusive and it was generally agreed by both sides that the time was not yet ripe for consideration of any long term plans. It was felt that for the time being every attempt should be made to implement, to the extent possible, the terms of the Stand-still Agreement. The political atmosphere was clouded by charges and counter-charges. According to the Government of India, Hyderabad had been guilty of a breach of the Agreement by transferring securities of rupees two hundred million in favour of the Government of Pakistan, and by passing an ordinance that within the territory of Hyderabad only the Hyderabad currency was to be legal tender. There was also the charge of allowing the United Press of America to set up a wireless receiving station in Hyderabad. The Government of India made a great deal of fuss over this particular issue. On the other side, Hyderabad was pressing the Government of India to honour the specific provisions in the Agreement regarding supply of certain arms and ammunition as the delay was seriously affecting the law and order situation in the State. In like manner, the embargo on the passage of goods through the Indian Union into Hyderabad territory still continued and large consignments of goods imported from Europe and America lay at the various ports of the Indian Union as they were not allowed to be moved to Hyderabad. The insidious propaganda against Hyderabad still continued in full blast in certain sections of the Indian Press and the Government of India had taken no steps to prevent it in any manner; in fact the All India Radio—a purely Government institution—itself was daily broadcasting statements, invariably false and most adverse to Hyderabad. The border raids were growing in intensity and frequency and the Government of India had taken no steps to control the lawless activities: in fact, there were numerous instances of the raids being inspired and engineered by the officials of the Central and Provincial Governments of Indian Union.

It was obvious that from a duel of charges and counter charges, nothing helpful would come out. Hyderabad delegation's visit to Delhi had only aroused a great deal of excitement on both sides but had achieved no more. There was a feeling of dissatisfaction growing. The only person who appeared satisfied with the unsatisfactory situation was the Agent General of India at Hyderabad. He met me smiling after my return from Delhi and remarked that I and Hyderabad delegations might waste as much time as we wished to, but the real key to the situation lay in his hand and not until Hyderabad came to some understanding with him over the various outstanding issues there would be any progress. In a deliberate undertone he admitted that since he had been kept out of the negotiations, he had seen to it that no understanding between Delhi and Hyderabad was arrived at!

For the remaining period of February, raids, derailment of trains and other lawless activities at the borders kept mounting up and the pious hopes and zealous efforts on the part of the Hyderabad administration to secure from the Government of India some, at least, of the arms and ammunition so desperately needed for maintaining law and order, all came to nothing. The responsibility of protecting the inhabitants and their property in bordering areas and of the railways and other lines of communications, lay on the unarmed or inadequately armed police and in every scuffle against the fully armed raiders they suffered heavy casualties. For every major and minor incident, therefore, the regular troops were called out as they, alone, had been left with a small quantity of ammunition. So much was the dispersion of the troops that there were hardly any units left at the headquarters to face any unforeseen eventuality. The troops themselves were tired of performing law and order duties; along with the police, a certain amount of demoralization was setting in among them as well. On a few occasions, when the raiders were successfully trapped, the police and the army had quite a decent haul of modern weapons and ammunition.

The first and foremost duty of the Government of Hyderabad under these circumstances was to reorganize and pool all its resources to face the border raids and ensure safety of life and property of its populace and of the railroads and other means of communication.

From the army depot, it was reported that there was a stock of some fifteen hundred old and rejected Henry Martinee rifles, but without any ammunition. I rushed myself to the depot and found that most of those rifles with certain amount of repairs could be made serviceable and would be useful—if only some ammunition could be secured. I decided to engage the government workshops to try and make the cases and shells. The first few attempts were not very successful as the necessary accuracy could not be secured in the dies, but those defects were soon rectified and the cases and shells were on regular production. A couple of young scientists at considerable risk to their persons soon produced sufficient quantities of cordite. The problem of making caps and initiators was patiently overcome and perhaps for the first time Hyderabad was manufacturing everything needed for a complete Henry Martinee cartridge.

I remember the excitement that I caused to the Police Chief when I told him that I would soon be presenting him with fifteen hundred Henry Martinees rifles with limited rounds of ammunition with each. He had been in a very dejected mood for some months for want of arms and ammunition. The constant harassment that his Department had been facing and the heavy casualties that his men were suffering had been too much for him to withstand. His immediate requirements were ten thousand .303 rifles, a couple of hundred sub-machine guns. Fifteen hundred reconditioned Henry Martinees with twenty-five rounds each was a poor response to his needs, but even that appeared to put a new life into him and his Department. The news soon got round in the rank and file of the Police that after all they were getting something with which they could face the lawless elements. It was an unwarranted optimism but it removed the sense of defeatism from their minds and restored their self-confidence a good deal.

Hyderabad had in all a border of over two thousand miles all of which had become vulnerable. Apart from the question of finding the arms and equipment, it was not physically possible to maintain sufficient forces along the entire border. The raiding parties were often composed of five hundred and more men and could break through any unguarded or inadequately-guarded point. Luckily they did not take any great risks and despite their numbers and arms

invariably ran away if fire was returned. Only in completely unarmed and undefended areas did they make a show of valour and carried on loot and murder to their hearts' content. By experience it was found that if defence posts could be organized, each containing say twenty to thirty men with half a dozen high velocity rifles and the rest muzzle loaders and a couple of sten guns between them, they could successfully stop the raiders. In fact, the very presence of an outpost of this kind had a good sobering effect in an appreciable area around and gave the inhabitants the much needed confidence. It was estimated that almost a thousand such centres were needed if the situation was to be brought under control. That would not be so difficult if only some arms and ammunitions could be secured. The men necessary could be found and placed under the charges of one or two experienced hands at each centre.

At the time of the signing of the Stand-still Agreement, collateral letters had passed between the Nizam and the Governor General of India to supplement the terms of the Agreement. The Nizam had clearly stated in his letter that if the Government of India failed to supply the arms and ammunition needed by Hyderabad within a reasonable period of time, then the Nizam would be at liberty to approach other sources of supply after intimating the Government of India. Referring to this matter the Governor General in his reply had stated that the Government of India would supply all the legitimate requirements of Hyderabad in arms and equipment and had very expressly stated that his Government "will take necessary action in regard to early supply of arms and ammunition for which an indent has been received from your (Nizam's) Government". The indents had been with the Government of India for long and had been checked and accepted by their Defence Department, as the immediate and minimum needs of Hyderabad. There were representatives of Hyderabad sitting at Delhi and there were also the innumerable promises and assurances and sweet words from the State Ministry. Not that it was not clear to Hyderabad that the Government of India, who were inspiring and engineering raids and disturbances all along the border, were not going to supply arms to Hyderabad to deal with their own machinations, but the difficulty was that Hyderabad had no

alternative before it. It had to be established first that the Government of India had failed to fulfil its obligations.

I have often been asked whether these raids at the borders and disturbances were not merely symptoms and not the disease itself; if so why was the Government of Hyderabad attaching so much importance to symptoms instead of coming to terms with the Government of India to eradicate the root cause of the disease? True enough, they were symptoms, but one should not forget that the leaders of the Indian Union were trying to make out and prove before the world a disease the symptoms of which were of their own creation, so as to justify their real object of absorbing Hyderabad politically, socially, culturally and ethically into their own fold. They were describing Hyderabad as the stomach of India and they said that they could not let their stomach get separated or remain in any way isolated from the main body. It was the argument of the strong against the weak. It was the same argument that Hitler had used for absorbing Austria and later on Czechoslovakia. For Hyderabad, therefore, the only course left open was to deal with the symptoms and defy the mean tactics to the best of her ability in the hope that if Hyderabad was successful in this respect, India would not have the courage to defy world opinion by playing the role of an aggressor against a weaker state.

The destruction caused to the property and physical injuries and loss of life aggravated the feelings of the Muslims and Hindus alike. Even the small section of the Hindu population who had been singing the State Congress slogans were tired of the continued sufferings of their country men. Despite the strenuous efforts of the Agent General of India in Hyderabad to hold the leaders of the State Congress together, they were breaking away as they could not stand more of the nonsense. It was obviously not easy for them to show a sudden *volte-face* in their public life; but they no longer made any effort to conceal their disgust of the tactics and the attitude of the Indian Union towards Hyderabad. Wherever, in the border areas, there were civic centres established or other organizations set up to deal with the menace, they whole-heartedly co-operated. In fact, some even volunteered to serve personally. This was an unexpected development. For the new spirit so created among the outlying populace, Hyderabad administra-

tion could only be grateful to the leaders of India and their misdeeds.

During this period, Ramanand Tirth, the President of the Hyderabad State Congress, was going about from place to place in the Indian Union, particularly in the surrounding provinces. He was addressing public meetings presided over at times by the Ministers of Indian Provinces. He was, however, diffusing such falsehoods and lies that he soon got himself discredited both outside and inside Hyderabad. He had practically lost all his following and his excesses and indulgence on the other hand made the Government of India suspicious of his inclinations and his ultimate motives. Before long, he realised, he could attract no more listeners to his fables outside and seriously began to worry over his waning influence, both within and outside the State, and his political position.

One night, a friend of mine, prominent in the business circles of India and on a short visit to Hyderabad, was dining with me. The conversation rambled from one topic to another. He was noticeably discreet all the time in the expression of his views on the burning political issues. At one stage, however, he burst out and said, "if for no other reason, Hyderabad should keep out of the fold of the Indian Union to save itself from corruption rampant there". I asked him if he thought there was no corruption in the services in Hyderabad. His reply was that the corruption in Hyderabad, as experienced by an outsider like himself, was of a very minor order and according to him those who were corrupt were more than satisfied by what he described as a generous tip. A remarkable thing he felt was that while their counterparts on the other side of the border extracted bribe almost with a vengeance, in a perfectly fearless manner and without any limit, those in Hyderabad always appeared afraid of being caught and there was never any show of malice or vengeance. I asked him what he thought of the proportion of honest Government servants to the dishonest in Hyderabad? He reflected for a moment and then said: divide the percentage of dishonest element in Indian Union by two and the intensity of their misdeeds by four and that would be a near enough account." To my last question whether bribery and corruption was in any way on the decline since India had gained its freedom, he emphatically said "No". "Why", he added, "we who

live in the Indian Union are free people now and why shouldn't the poor dishonest elements in the services not feel also equally free". He concluded with a laugh and said, "May be the services in Hyderabad do not possess the intelligence and smartness necessary for corruption of a really high order.—"

No one can justify corruption in the services whether that amounted to extraction of bribes with a vengeance or to getting satisfied with a generous tip. At the same time there must be very few, indeed, if any, administrations in the world which can claim to have thoroughly honest services. One would not have thought that the service personnel of Hyderabad would be able to withstand, for long, the forces of border raids by trained men equipped with modern weapons and generous supply of ammunition. But, the merciless atrocities of the raiders and ruthless attitude of the Indian Union had inspired and stiffened the guts of the public and the services alike. The service personnel who normally thought that an hour or two before the official closing time of the offices, their day's work was over, were now working all hours of day and night. They were put constantly in the most inaccessible areas and most dangerous spots with a handful of men but they faced all odds with a valour and resourcefulness that volumes could be written about. Overnight they had taken to simple ways of living and to nobler planes of thinking. Barring a few, most of the corrupt elements had mended their ways and had devoted themselves, heart and soul, to their jobs. This amazing transformation in the outlook and attitude of the services personnel was indeed very gratifying and to some extent at any rate made up their inadequacy in arms and ammunition and numbers. The raiders were quick to realize that they had to treat with respect the ill-equipped and untrained defenders on the side of Hyderabad. There was soon a sharp decline in the frequency of the minor raids. But, the fewer raids were now more intense and concentrated. In addition to the high velocity rifles, the raiders were now equipped with sub-machine guns and other automatic weapons. They had also at their command plenty of motor lorries and at times armoured vehicles. Occasionally, there would be one or two unidentified planes hovering along the borders to locate the defences and their strength in the Hyderabad territory.

CHAPTER XVIII

BETWEEN DELHI AND KARACHI

Sir Walter Monckton had acted as the Constitutional Adviser of Hyderabad for more than a decade and was fully conversant with the political background of the State. He had felt hurt at the lack of confidence expressed in him by the public and more particularly by the Ittehad leaders. The Chhatari delegation of which he was a member had been stopped from proceeding to Delhi by a large scale public demonstration. Along with Chhattari's, his own residence had been surrounded by large mobs. He had thus left Hyderabad very unhappy over the treatment meted out to him.

On my return from Delhi, I wrote a letter to Monckton and invited him and his wife to come to Hyderabad. The Nizam also wrote him a personal letter and asked him to accept my invitation. Monckton agreed and with his wife joined us. He and Mountbatten had been friends and in some way colleagues at one time. Though nothing material was expected out of this friendship, so far as the Indo-Hyderabad relations went, it was felt that he might be able to get from Mountbatten at least a correct picture of the way the minds of the Indian leaders were working. Monckton's capacity of quick grasp and accurate drafting was also an asset. He and Lady Monckton accompanied us in our formal visits to Delhi towards the end of February.

At Delhi the atmosphere appeared pretty much the same as it was at the end of the previous month. The Hyderabad's Agent General apprised us of the general situation. He said that the difficulties in his way were growing day by day and that the blockade against Hyderabad was being made tighter. He also said that he had absolutely no hope of Delhi supplying any arms and ammunition to Hyderabad and thought that India was hoping and was waiting for the day when Hyderabad would have exhausted what little ammunition there was and would be reduced to a completely helpless position, both in regard to maintenance of law and order inside and of offering any

resistance to the raiders from outside. The situation in regard to other civil supplies and essential requisites of the industrial and economic life of the State including medicines and medical stores was described as equally gloomy. He said he had been receiving very sympathetic and cordial treatment from the entire diplomatic Corps present in Delhi who were all very indignant over the treatment that was being meted out to Hyderabad, with the sole exception of the British High Commissioner and his staff. Presumably that mission was acting under the guidance of Mountbatten and was either indifferent or even inclined to help India to carry out its nefarious plans against Hyderabad.

So, we wave once again in Delhi. The delegation stayed as usual at the Hyderabad House while Moncktons accepted the invitation of Mountbattens and went to the Governor General's residence. On our arrival at Delhi, I was surrounded by a number of representatives, both of Indian and Foreign Press. I was particularly anxious to avoid any reference to the talks that were about to open and despite my silence they all treated me with great kindness. A part of the Indian and the entire foreign press was extremely sympathetic towards Hyderabad and they expressed their wish to see the Indo-Hyderabad tangle resolved in an amicable manner.

My first talks were as usual with Menon who came to see me within an hour or so of our arrival. He repeated the same old story that feelings throughout India had gone very tense and that unless Hyderabad acceded to India the situation would not be relieved. I told Menon point blank that I had come to Delhi for business and would like to talk business. It would be wasting time to go on repeating the same old story when the fact was quite well known that the Government of India was inspiring the press against Hyderabad and using that as an argument in their favour. If India meant business too, we had better both get down to realities and start in a spirit of genuine understanding. Menon then came out that one of the biggest obstacles in the way of any further progress was the transfer by Hyderabad of the securities of two hundred million rupees in favour of Pakistan. The Government of India, he said, was also very sore over the ban imposed by the Government of Hyderabad on the use of Indian

currency within the State. If some way could be found to meet the view points of the Government of India over these two issues, he assured me that to a very great extent the path for further understanding would be cleared. Monckton had private talks with Mountbatten and he came to see me with more or less the same impressions. In the meantime I had a couple of long interviews each with Nehru and Patel. The interviews with Patel were of particular interest and some of the points are worth recording. He persistently impressed upon me that he was not so anti-Muslim as had been made out. He recalled my interview with Gandhiji and said that the latter had told him how he had tried to remove any such impression from my own mind. He then produced a couple of papers—one a publication of some sort condemning his activities and policy and the other an anonymous letter to a certain dentist by name of Patel at Karachi. In the letter, the dentist had been warned that if he wished to remain in Karachi, then he should not use any of the three components of Patel's name, that is, Sirdar or Vallabbhai or Patel. If the dentist did not choose to do so then he had better leave Karachi and take refuge outside Pakistan. A time limit had been set for compliance after which some anonymous society in Karachi would see that he was properly dealt with for disregarding the instructions. Patel then said that the unfortunate dentist wanted to leave Karachi thereafter but was not allowed by the local authorities to take his equipment with him. During our conversation he appeared very grieved over the incident and with almost tears in his eyes asked me why should he or his name be treated with such pronounced contempt. I felt unhappy and very embarrassed over the situation as presented by Patel and confessed that if those were facts, then my co-religionists aught not to lower themselves to such levels. I asked him if I might have the papers for some time as may be I could do something in the matter. He let me have them on the promise that I would return them after I had dealt with them.

I then broached the subject of the Indo-Hyderabad relations and very soon found that it was no longer the same emotional Sardar Vallabbhai Patel that had been talking to me a few moments ago. He concluded in a somewhat abrupt manner that so far as he was con-

cerned there was no alternative to Hyderabad acceding to India. If his colleagues and Mountbatten wanted to follow any other course it was for them to face the consequence. That was the first time that I had direct evidence of the fact that there were differences in the Indian Cabinet over the Indo-Hyderabad situation, of which I had been privately informed before.

It was in the course of one of these meetings that Rajagopalachari, the then Governor of Western Bengal, walked in. After formal greetings he apologised for having intruded on us but on receiving assurance both from Patel and myself that his presence was welcome and on my adding that he might even be able to make some positive contribution, he stayed on. He patiently listened to our talks and, if anything, by his occasional remarks, appeared more inclined to favour Hyderabad's view point. Just about that moment, there was a long distance phone call for Patel and while the latter remained away for quite a while Rajagopalachari expressed his genuine sorrow at the manner, in which the Government of India were dealing with Hyderabad. He had the fullest appreciation for the stand taken by Hyderabad. He said the main and the biggest obstacle in the matter of arriving at any understanding between India and Hyderabad was, at the moment, Patel, and that it was very unfortunate that this was so. He added that on more than one occasion he had requested Patel to change his attitude, as he himself, coming from Madras, the next door neighbour of Hyderabad, could appreciate the situation better than others. Patel, however, he said, had remained impervious to all reasoning. Since he himself was not in authority, there was nothing more that he could do. The Rajaji also added that more or less the same were his feelings over the treatment meted out to the Muslim minorities in India. He had pleaded for better and more generous treatment of the Muslim minorities in India but Patel had his own ideas in the matter and was not prepared to accept any one else's view point.

I asked Rajaji if he minded telling me if Mountbatten could be of any help, in dealing with the matter. Rajaji frankly doubted very much if Mountbatten could do anything against the wishes of Patel but he thought that for the present his medium may continue. I then

requested Rajaji to try and help to whatever extent he could in arriving at a fair solution of the present tangle. He said that he was hardly in a position to do very much but he would only be too happy to do anything he could.

My preliminary talks with Nehru were as usual of a general type. At great length he elaborated the possibilities which the use and application of atomic energy held for the advancement of human race and particularly of a backward country like India. That done, he said that pending my talks with Mountbatten he would not like to discuss the Indo-Hyderabad problems. During the conversations, however, he laid a great deal of emphasis on the possibilities of India playing the role of leadership of Asia. He thought that the day was not far when India would mean the same to Asia as United States of America meant to the continents of North and South America.

My talks with Mountbatten then commenced. Some of the conversations were unofficial; the others were formal. Moin Nawaz Jung who held the charge of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in addition to Finance, was also in the delegation and participated in the discussions on the 2nd of March. As head of the delegation, which had negotiated and finally concluded the Stand-still Agreement on behalf of Hyderabad, he was a particular target of attack both from Mountbatten and Menon during the conferences. Moin Nawaz Jung, they said, ought to have disclosed the fact of the transfer of Hyderabad Securities to Pakistan. Mountbatten thought that he should have at least confided in him and he almost accused him of bad faith. Moin Nawaz Jung retorted that he had come to Delhi to negotiate the Indo-Hyderabad relations and not to publicise all that Hyderabad was or was not doing, which had no direct bearing on the Stand-still arrangement. He said Hyderabad had been investing its monies in Commonwealth countries before and was just as free to do so now. I intervened and asked Mountbatten if the Pakistan loan was the only bone of contention between India and Hyderabad and if so what he thought could be done now that the securities had been made over to Pakistan. Mountbatten said if I could only arrange with the Government of Pakistan not to encash the securities advanced by Hyderabad during the currency of the Stand-still Agreement with Hyderabad, a fresh

chapter in the Indo-Hyderabad relations would open. The idea was repugnant to me that after having made over the securities voluntarily to Pakistan in exchange for Pakistan securities, I should now have to approach with a request to consider the securities freezed for the duration of the Stand-still Agreement. And then, I was not certain whether such a proposition would be acceptable to Pakistan authorities. Anxious, however, to maintain peace at any price with the Indian Union, I agreed to go myself to Karachi and see if the matter could be arranged in the manner suggested by the Governor General of India. I told Mountbatten that I would be greatly risking the prestige of the State and my own reputation, but would do so if it would really ensure harmonious relations between India and Hyderabad. Mountbatten jumped in his chair with excitement and said that I would be rendering the greatest service both to Hyderabad and India. He assured me unreservedly that once that was done it would definitely pave the way to smooth relationship between India and Hyderabad. In an undertone he then added that had it not been for the Kashmir embroil, India would never have been so much insistent on this particular point.

While the proposition apparently greatly satisfied all concerned including Vallabbhai Patel and Menon, the latter hasitatingly added that there would be only one more thorn left in the flesh. I asked him what that was. In reply he said that it was the ban that the Government of Hyderabad had placed on the use of the Indian currency in the State. I asked Menon as to how it affected India and why should India take exception to Hyderabad enforcing a regulation making its own currency the only legal tender within its own territory. Menon replied that there were large number of passengers travelling from one part of India to the other who passed through Hyderabad and they ran the risk of prosecution if they used the Indian currency during the transit. I asked Mountbatten how it would be if the Government of Hyderabad exempted bonafide travellers. Both Menon and Mountbatten thought that would fully meet the wishes of the Government of India. Moin Nawaz Jung thereupon agreed to modify the Hyderabad Currency Ordinance with a view to exempting bonafide travellers.

Things seemed to be moving fairly satisfactorily and Mountbatten and Monckton appeared particularly pleased. Everything seemed to hinge on my arranging with the Government of Pakistan to withhold the encashment of the securities made over by Hyderabad till the end of the period of the Stand-still Agreement.

The atmosphere both in Hyderabad and Delhi was, as could be expected, extremely tense during these conversations and it was obvious that any announcement of the intended visit of the Prime Minister of Hyderabad to Karachi in the midst of Indo-Hyderabad conversations would give rise to the wildest of speculations. Any attempt to keep the visit secret was also impossible and fraught with still greater speculation. I decided to have a simple statement released that the Prime Minister of Hyderabad was proceeding on a short visit to Karachi and that the Government of the Indian Union had been informed of the visit. Still the problem of withholding the press from speculations remained. The ever resourceful V. P. Menon readily volunteered to take care of the matter and asked us not to worry. And, that he did with admirable efficiency. All that appeared in the Indian press was the laconic statement I had released and not a word more nor any comment. It was an amazing example of how the press was under the control of the Government; a press that, the Government of India always conveniently pretended, was entirely free to say what it liked and over which they could exercise no control whatsoever.

The Governor General of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and the Prime Minister and other authorities concerned of Pakistan were immediately contacted over phone and they agreed to meet me the very next day. My journey to Karachi on the third of March was uneventful. I was only accompanied by the Additional Agent General of Hyderabad, Yusuf Yar Jung, and an A.D.C. and a private servant. The Governor General had very kindly invited me to be his personal guest which I gladly accepted. He was to meet me at luncheon and that gave me just enough time to contact one or two Ministers and get their reactions to the proposal with which I had visited Karachi. Their first reaction, despite their eagerness to help Hyderabad in whatever way they could, was not very encouraging when it came to the freezing of the securities over a period of time. Pakistan,

evidently, had taken into account the sale-proceeds of the securities in their immediate financial programme and my proposition was going to cause a good deal of inconvenience. But, later, my talks with the Quaid-e-Azam were in a very different spirit. He unhesitatingly said that anything that could be done to bring about a better understanding and build up a lasting and satisfactory relationship between India and Pakistan, he would only be too glad to undertake. I pointed out to him that the reactions of some of his Ministers concerned were not the same and apparently the sale-proceeds of the securities were urgently needed by Pakistan. In his typically calm and composed fashion he waved his finger and said no consideration whatsoever would be allowed to jeopardise the interests of Hyderabad. A meeting with the Prime Minister and other Ministers concerned of Pakistan was arranged for the same afternoon which he himself attended and after discussing the matter for a while, he gave his final decision that the securities would not be cashed during the currency of the Stand-still Agreement between India and Hyderabad. I thanked the Quaid and other Ministers for their benevolent gesture. I also expressed my earnest hope that the incident would not in any way affect the generous feelings of Pakistan towards Hyderabad. The Quaid assured me that we need have no anxiety on that account and if there was anything at any time that Pakistan could do to help Hyderabad, it would be unhesitatingly done. He then expressed his regret that unfortunately over the Kashmir issue the relations between India and Pakistan were at the moment strained, and, therefore, he and his colleagues were not able to offer their good offices to resolve the Indo-Hyderabad tension. Otherwise, he said, Pakistan would have come forward to assist both sides to arrive at a friendly solution.

I was pleased with the developments: the chief bone of contention between India and Hyderabad for the time had been so easily and so satisfactorily removed. Of course, during the course of conversation Jinnah had twice asked me whether I was certain that the freezing of the securities in the manner suggested would really bring about a better understanding between Hyderabad and India. His repetition was significant. I had my own misgivings in the matter, but I said I hoped so, and there the matter ended. At the end of the meeting I

went to my room a little exhausted and stretched myself on a chair for a few moments. How much different I thought was the atmosphere in the two capitals. Here there was ease of mind, perfect frankness and genuineness in talks and deeds; at Delhi there was fear and suspicion from top to bottom. Imagine, a new country with even the elementary administrative organization still in the making, so greatly in need of finance even to meet its most immediate needs, should have so readily and willingly agreed to make such a sacrifice to help Hyderabad! There, at Delhi everyone wanted to see the last of all that Hyderabad claimed to exist for and stood for!

After a long long time I had spent a really care-free evening that night. Ghulam Mohammed, who was holding the portfolio of finance, was having a little dinner party at his residence and he invited me to join. My benevolent host allowed me to go. Liaquat Ali Khan and several other Ministers were there. The loss of two hundred million rupees did not seem to hang on anyone's mind—not even over the Minister of Finance. They all only appeared anxious and hoped that a better understanding would soon arise between India and Hyderabad and that Hyderabad would preserve its traditions, culture and, above everything, the communal harmony that had remained unstinted for generations. The gathering included several members of the diplomatic corps and others. Many of them had at one time or other been in Hyderabad and all had very pleasant memories. Everyone of the diplomats that I was introduced to, wished well for Hyderabad and wished me luck.

Having settled the problems relating to Hyderabad much quicker than I had anticipated, I took the opportunity of discussing the Kashmir issue with the Governor General and other leaders of Pakistan. These talks took up the better part of the afternoon and continued for long after dinner. Liaquat Ali Khan turned up after dinner accompanied by Ghulam Mohammed and joined my discussions with the Quaid. We were all closeted till well after midnight. Just as we got ready to leave, Jinnah asked me to stay behind for a few minutes. We both sat down and further discussed the matter for another two hours. The substance of my suggestion was that Jammu should go to India and under the auspices of the U.N.O. the question, whether Kashmir should

join India or Pakistan, should be settled by a plebiscite. Till the results of the plebiscite were out, respective Governments of Shaikh Abdulla and Azad Kashmir should function in the territories held by each. I had also suggested that under the observers of the U.N. the forces of both Pakistan and India should be completely withdrawn from the respective territories and only a skeleton army of each Dominion should be left behind to ensure law and order. The strength of such skeleton armies should be very quickly determined on broad lines by neutral military experts to be appointed by the U.N. After very lengthy discussions in which I had mostly been taking the side of India both Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan told me that they could not agree, in principle, to leave Jammu out but if I thought India would favourably react to such a proposition I better let them know and pursue the matter further. To my mind there was equity and fairness in the proposal and I believed that if India was really anxious to arrive at an honourable and fair solution, it should agree to the broad outlines and both sides should work out further details.

After leaving Jinnah when I walked across to my room I was surprised to find both Liaquat Ali Khan and Ghulam Mohammed still waiting there for me. The three of us again discussed the Kashmir issue threadbare till early hours of the morning. They finally wished me luck and said good-bye and left me to snatch a little rest.

I could stretch myself for an hour before preparing to depart. I had hardly stayed twenty hours in the capital of Pakistan. When I arrived at the airport, the crew of my plane appeared all anxious to read from my face whether my mission to Karachi had been a success. They were glad to find me cheerful in spirit although physically strained. The Captain said that the weather was fine and he expected a smooth flight. I had hardly any sleep at Karachi. I dozed off to the tune of the humming engines and only woke up to find the plane circling over Delhi and about to land.

CHAPTER XIX

HYDERABAD DELEGATION OUTWITTED

There were many anxious faces awaiting me at Delhi Airport. Along with my colleagues there was also a large group of press representatives. They also seemed eager to get some clue from me. Many of them had come to know the object of my mission although under the directions of the Ministry of Information they had been discreetly quiet.

Before proceeding to Karachi I had informally talked over the Kashmir issue both with Nehru and Patel and of course with Mountbatten and they had all welcomed my offer to be of some service in resolving the dispute. Within a few hours of my return to Delhi on the fourth of March, I met Mountbatten. He looked overjoyed when I told him I had been able to arrange with the Government of Pakistan not to encash the Hyderabad securities during the currency of the Stand-still Agreement. He told me that the Government of India had been very worried lest the Government of Pakistan decide to unload the securities on the Indian market and thereby upset the financial market of India. With this and the undertaking given by Moin Nawaz Jung to modify the currency Ordinance in Hyderabad, he felt certain that the Government of India would now unhesitatingly remove all the restrictions imposed on the flow of all the goods into Hyderabad which had been held up at the Indian ports and would also commence supply of arms and ammunition indented by Hyderabad and would discharge all its other obligations under the Stand-still Agreement.

I then communicated to Mountbatten the outcome of my talks with the leaders of Pakistan on the Kashmir problem. I presented to him the formula that I had discussed with the Pakistan authorities and told him that to my mind it appeared fair to both sides and the best face saving device for the two contesting Governments. Mountbatten, however, doubted if any proposition, involving plebiscite under two different authorities in Kashmir, would be acceptable to the Indian leaders as they were insistent on the withdrawal of the tribes and the

Pakistan troops from the Kashmir Valley as a pre-requisite to any settlement. He, however, promised to talk over the matter with the Indian leaders and inform me later of their reactions. In the meantime, he advised me not to talk direct to any of the Indian leaders as that might unnecessarily prejudice the affairs of Hyderabad which after a long time now appeared to be taking a satisfactory turn. He communicated to me later that the line advocated by me to resolve the Kashmir tangle was not acceptable to the Indian leaders and he offered his personal advice to me not to pursue the matter further in the interest of Hyderabad. It is well worth recording here that almost similar terms including of course Jammu, were finally agreed to by India after a lapse of some ten months (although never really observed) during which a great deal of misery and loss of life had been inflicted on numberless people, and had cost the already depleted exchequer of India a good deal of money.

The formal conference presided over by Mountbatten which took place following my return from Karachi between the representatives of the Government of India and of Hyderabad was about the only meeting in which a really cordial atmosphere prevailed. Mountbatten was all *a'bras-ouverts* and profusely expressed his appreciation and gratification at the efforts of the Hyderabad delegates to resolve the differences between the two Governments and assured me on behalf of the Government of India that immediate and sustained action would be taken to discharge all the obligations of the Government of India under the Stand-still Agreement. It was prominently brought out that in view of Hyderabad having fixed up, to the entire satisfaction of the Government of India, both the issues of loan of securities to Pakistan and the currency ordinance, the Government of India would forthwith release all the goods and other commodities held up at the ports and other places in the Indian Union and would also arrange the immediate supply of the arms and ammunition needed by Hyderabad. That Government also undertook to effectively control border raids into Hyderabad and to prevent anti-Hyderabad propaganda both in the press and over the radio. It was further agreed that henceforth every attempt would be made for the harmonious working of the Stand-still Agreement, in which both sides would do their utmost to

accommodate each other's view point and respect each other's wishes. It was mutually agreed to issue a joint press statement which would be drafted by Walter Monckton giving out the main features of the agreement arrived at. The Government of India, however, requested that in view of the general feelings prevailing no specific mention should be made in the press statement of the undertaking given by the Government of India of immediate supply of arms and ammunition and I consented. The conference thus concluded in a very happy atmosphere. The members of the Hyderabad delegation congratulated each other and so did the other side. They all agreed that a new chapter was now opening in the Indo-Hyderabad relations.

The satisfaction ensuing from the happy ending of the conference, however, proved to be very short lived. In accordance with the agreement arrived at, Monckton had drafted a couple of simple paragraphs to be released jointly on behalf of the Governments of India and of Hyderabad to the anxiously awaiting Indian and Foreign press. The paragraphs read as under:

"Discussions have taken place during the last few days between representatives of the Government of India and Hyderabad Government under the chairmanship of H. E. the Governor General. As a result of these discussions which were held in a most friendly atmosphere a number of issues have been resolved.

"With reference to the exchange of securities between Hyderabad and Pakistan the Government of Hyderabad has agreed to ask the Government of Pakistan not to place the securities in question on the market during the currency of the present Stand-still Agreement between Hyderabad and the Indian Union. The Government of Hyderabad has also agreed, with reference to the recent currency ordinance, to make provision to enable travellers from outside the State to use Indian currency for their bona fide requirements within the State without incurring any penalty. The Government of India on its part has agreed to implement its obligations under the Stand-still Agreement and in particular to take necessary steps to remove all restrictions on the import into Hyderabad of motor vehicles and machinery and other goods. In regard to all other matters of common concern the two Governments agreed to work together in close harmony."

The draft was in strict accordance with the minutes which had been faithfully recorded by the most trusted conference Secretary of the Governor General, Erskine Crumm. Even he had seen Monckton's draft and found it perfectly in order. Any reference to the undertaking given by the Government of India with regard to the supply of arms and ammunition had been carefully omitted on the request of the Government of India. When the draft was shown to me I told Monckton that I wished it had been less prosaic and little more inspiring, now that we were turning a new page in the Indo-Hyderabad relations. Monckton did not mind my remark but thought it better to be more cautious. I agreed with him. The draft was sent to V.P. Menon for the formal approval of the Government of India and my colleagues and I started getting ready to depart for Hyderabad the following morning.

The Agent General of Hyderabad had arranged a pleasant dinner party for that night to which he invited several Ministers and officials of the Government of India and a good number of foreign diplomats in Delhi. Nehru, of course, as usual had declined the invitation but among others several ministers of the Government of India were expected. The Hyderabad House appeared in a cheerful mood all round and the overworked staff were breathing a sigh of relief and relaxation. One of the Under-Secretaries of the Hyderabad House who had taken the draft of the press note to V.P. Menon was long over-due and I was beginning to wonder as to what could have happened. At last he turned up when most of the guests had already arrived. He appeared very perturbed when I saw him from a distance. I left the party and called him aside to find out what had happened. He said things were not good at all. He reported that Menon had made some alterations in the draft which was further touched up by the Deputy Prime Minister Patel and finally when it was shown to Nehru he had materially altered it and now the draft in its present form could hardly be acceptable to Hyderabad. But, I protested, the draft was in strict accordance with the minutes of the Conference. He said that all that had been pointed out both to Patel and to Nehru but they insisted that the joint statement should either be on the lines now laid down by them or there should be no statement issued at all.

This unexpected development caused me a good deal of concern. It was really not the change of words in the draft that mattered so much; it was the spirit behind the changes that was manifest. I pulled Monckton and some of my colleagues aside for a quick consultation and tried to modify the draft incorporating some of the alterations that had been made by Nehru and returned it to V.P. for further consideration. We all felt that it would be a great pity to let all the good work done during the past few days go overboard on the mere wording of the press statement. Finally, I persuaded Monckton to try and recast the draft with a view to accommodate the dictates of the Prime Minister of India to the extent that it did not completely wash away the sands from under our feet. But, the dictators of India were prepared to consider not a word of alteration of their own draft. We were firmly told that the joint press note would have to be exactly as altered by the Prime Minister of India or there would be no joint statement at all. What Nehru wanted us to agree was more than any Government, no matter how submissive it may wish to become, could agree to without completely losing its face before its own people. The draft as altered by Nehru read as follows:—

"Discussions have taken place during the last few days between the representatives of the Government of India and of the Hyderabad Government under the chairmanship of the Governor General. The discussions have not been concluded and the Hyderabad delegation will return by the end of the month when the discussions will be resumed.

"In the meanwhile, with reference to the exchange of securities between Hyderabad and Pakistan, the Government of Hyderabad has agreed to arrange not to cash the securities during the currency of the Stand-still Agreement. The Government of Hyderabad has also agreed with reference to the recent currency ordinance to amend it suitably in consultation with the Government of India.

"In regard to the matters of common concern covered by the Stand-still Agreement, the two Governments have agreed to work together in close harmony".

So, the Prime Minister of India could not tolerate even such innocent though perfectly accurate expression that the discussions had

been held 'in a most friendly atmosphere'. Everything important to which Hyderabad had agreed to or given an undertaking had been prominently brought out but there was not to be the slightest indication of what the Government of India agreed to do beyond the casual mention at the end that the two Governments had undertaken to work the agreement in close harmony. What was behind all this? Whatever there was, it was certain that it could not be anything straight or honest. It became obvious before long that there was a lot more behind a mere alteration of the draft of the joint press announcement. After several attempts to change the Indian Prime Minister's draft in any way had failed, I expressed my inability to be a party to any joint announcement of the nature proposed and it was settled finally that there would be no announcement at all.

Both Nehru and Patel must have breathed a sigh of relief when the long and strenuous efforts of Mountbatten and Menon and the Hyderabad Delegation came to such an abrupt end. Poor Mountbatten and Menon—the latter who had directly to conduct the negotiations—they were both left in a very embarrassed position. Monckton concluded that there was nothing more that Mountbatten could do in the matter although he had been made to preside over all the negotiations on behalf of the Government of India. He obviously had not the courage to say a word in the matter either to Nehru or to Patel. One would have thought he would have at least resented the embarrassment caused personally to himself by the attitude of the leaders of India and would have refused to become a party at least to further negotiations when he had seen throughout, that the leaders of India were neither honest in their intentions nor acting straight. But Mountbatten was not made of very sensitive elements and obviously he had reasons better known to himself to serve the Indian leaders regardless of his own personal role in the matter. Monckton of course was dumb-founded and said he could not comprehend what had betaken his distinguished countryman. I, on my part, felt more convinced than ever that the sooner Mountbatten was out of the show and the matters were left to be directly dealt with between the leaders of India and Hyderabad, the better it would be.

The dinner at the Hyderabad House went on as if nothing was

happening behind the scene. I pretended to laugh and take part in the usual jokes of the diplomatic circles. Nevertheless, I wished I had been left alone for a while. The fourth day of March had oscillated the political barometer of Hyderabad pretty severely. At one time, it had appeared that all was going to be fine and a new leaf was going to be turned in the Indo-Hyderabad relationship. By the fall of the night it all looked the other way about. Had it been deliberately planned to see how far Hyderabad would go and to what extent it could be made to climb down? If so, the drama had been very cleverly enacted and the delegation from Hyderabad had been very successfully outwitted. Hyderabad had been made to play out all its cards while the undertakings given by the Government of India, it now appeared certain, were not worth the paper on which they had been written.

CHAPTER XX

BORDER SITUATION DETERIORATES

As anxiously as anyone else in Hyderabad K.M. Munshi, the Agent General of India, was awaiting the return of the delegation from Delhi. He had been seething all the time with anger and indigation that Delhi should have kept him out of such important and vital negotiations and was hoping that the talks would end in failure. His hopes were fulfilled. Soon after my return he met me with a smile of great satisfaction on his face. He vehemently said that it was futile on the part of anyone in India to try to solve the Indo-Hyderabad tangle and that he was the only person that could do it and was therefore chosen for the job by none other than Gandhi himself. In a low tone he added that he had already warned me that the delegates of Hyderabad, going up and down Delhi each time, were only wasting their time when the key of the situation lay at the "Dakshna Sadan" only ten miles away from the metropolis, meaning thereby his own residence. He then proceeded with a note of triumph in his voice that when he came to know over the phone on the evening of the fourth March that an agreement over various outstanding issues had been arrived at and a joint statement was to be issued he had warned Delhi that if such a thing happened he would immediately resign his post and carry on such an all out war on the floor of the Indian Assembly that would shake the very foundation of the Government at Delhi. He said he was fully confident that his verdict would be *sans-appel* and that after the warning no one in Delhi could dare do anything and thereafter the announcement was modified in a manner that could not be acceptable to the Hyderabad Delegation. With a friendly nod and a broad smile again on his face he suggested that we should now meet and start discussing the Indo-Hyderabad tangle point by point *de novo*.

It was a perplexing state of affairs. Frankly, I had not suspected that our good friend at "Dakshna Sadan", only a few miles away from my own residence, could pull strings at that distance and to that extent and influence every one at Delhi over long distance telephone wires.

Nor could I visualise how anyone could possibly influence the well considered decision of the Cabinet Ministers and of the Governor General. Yet, such were the complex politics of Delhi that each leader was mortally afraid of the other and no one appeared to know for certain when and how anyone might choose to stab the other either on the floor of the Assembly or through the press. At the particular moment, Hyderabad, as a result of the most virulent and vociferous campaign carried out by the All India Radio and the press, had become a dangerous monster to the public mind and the masses had been prepared to believe anything and everything against Hyderabad. It was, therefore, not altogether impossible for Munshi to have shown a fisted glove to the leaders at Delhi. I was not inclined to take Munshi's offer seriously to sit down with him once again and go over the whole ground but Moin Nawaz Jung felt that an attempt should be made. The Nizam himself was totally indifferent to the proposed talks with Munshi and believed it would all be beating about the bush. In fact, on our return from Delhi, he did not appear much surprised at the behaviour of the leaders of the Indian Government. The only thing that astonished him was the role of Mountbatten. After some thought he decided to write a personal letter to Mountbatten. In the letter, he enumerated all that I had done to appease the Government of India and once again sought his good offices to remove the blockade around the State and honour the terms of the Stand-still Agreement. He concluded by saying "If Your Excellency can secure what I have asked for in this letter, you will not find me wanting in my efforts, on the lines indicated by my Prime Minister, to remove any ground for distrust of Hyderabad which now exists in India".

The talks with Munshi were mainly conducted by Moin Nawaz Jung. I only participated occasionally. It took several days to cover the numerous outstanding issues and with great difficulty an agreement was eventually arrived at on most of the points under dispute. A joint memorandum was drawn up and after a good deal of wrangling and many alterations the draft was finally ready for signature. There was a dinner party at the "Dakshna Sadan" and after the function Munshi and I sat down and we signed the paper. He appeared in a very happy mood and believed that after all he had laid the

foundation of the future Indo-Hyderabad relations. Of course, the decisions incorporated in the memorandum were subject to the formal concurrence of the respective Governments but Munshi foresaw no difficulty in obtaining the concurrence of the Government of India to the various points of agreement he had reached. The following morning he proceeded to Delhi full of confidence and proud of his achievement. Moin Nawaz Jung also believed that after all something concrete had been achieved; but, with my previous experiences of Delhi I was doubtful, although I too hoped for the best. It was only the Nizam, who was certain that nothing would come out of it.

The situation of law and order in the meantime continued to worsen in the border areas. The use of modern arms and extensive application of explosives to blow up rail and road communication by the raiders was causing serious anxiety to the administration. Wherever there were any defence arrangements the situation was well under control but the rest of the areas were all at the mercy of the raiders. There was a general cry for fire arms from every direction and some of the district officers during the course of our periodic conferences were very outspoken and critical of the Government for its inability to supply adequate arms and ammunition to enable them to discharge their duties. The indignation of the police and other civil officers was very genuine. They wanted either military to be posted along the entire border relieving them of the responsibility for the safety of the inhabitants or themselves to be equipped with sufficient and suitable weapons to face the situation. With the small army that Hyderabad had there was no question of manning the two thousand miles border with troops. The only course left open was to provide the local authorities in whatever manner possible some arms and ammunition to deal with the raiders.

As early as the middle of 1947, the Government of Hyderabad had started exploring the possibilities of directly importing arms and ammunition needed by Hyderabad. Prior to the end of British rule in India, the Congress dominated 'Indian Government' could not, at policy level, deny the right of Hyderabad to receive its quota of arms and ammunition from the Indian arsenals and failing that its right to directly import from abroad. But, by their machinations at working

level they had succeeded not only in preventing any delivery of arms and ammunitions but also in waylaying rail cars containing other essential goods consigned to Hyderabad. It was a common occurrence, for wagons of essential goods from ports consigned for Hyderabad to disappear altogether *en route* in the Indian territory. For the land locked Hyderabad to expect, under these circumstances, for any arms and ammunitions imported even with the consent and knowledge of the Government of India to reach Hyderabad was only hoping for the moon. When I took charge as Prime Minister, I found El-Edroos still engaged on his wild goose chase for arms somewhere in Europe. I immediately called him back. On his return journey, his plane was signalled to land in Bombay as he would not be permitted to fly direct over the Indian territory to Hyderabad. So he landed at Bombay and his plane was very thoroughly searched to make sure he was not carrying any war materials. In the meantime, probably with a view to forestall any attempt on the part of Hyderabad to import any weapons, there were frequent statements in the Indian press as to how Hyderabad has been importing and massing arms and ammunition and preparing itself for an armed clash with the Indian Union. On one occasion, Nehru himself did not hesitate to make a statement that the Government of India were fully reported of the import of war materials into Hyderabad and went so far as to say that some consignments of arms and ammunition had been seized by the Indian Union authorities which were on their way to Hyderabad! All this propaganda was going on at a time when neither a rifle nor a round of ammunition had even been purchased by Hyderabad. In the course of a conversation I once challenged Nehru if he could show a single concrete instance of the seizure of the arms and ammunition on its way to Hyderabad or produce a single piece that had been claimed to be seized. Nehru had no reply to give—he skilfully changed the topic.

Something, however, had to be done in the face of the developments that were now taking place. Hyderabad's Agent General at Delhi kept on conveying to me the vague promises of the Defence Department of the Government of India under the instructions of the State Department to release a few hundred rifles and a small quantity of ammunition. To me, it did not make sense that on one hand the

Government of India should organise and sponsor the raids and on the other hand supply arms and equipment to fight those very raiders. At one time, I thought, they may be wanting to supply some small quantities to serve as a screen for their activities, but even that never happened.

The situation was getting desperate. If the border raids and further infiltrations within could not be checked, the State would before long be lost to the raiders and would give the Government of India a plausible excuse to intervene to maintain law and order. If the State had to be defended and internal security maintained some arms and ammunitions had to be procured at any cost. There were two alternatives open: one was to purchase them abroad and fly direct over the Indian territory from some base outside India and the other was to manufacture as many of them and as best as possible. I decided to try both.

An important issue now arose that if we were going to import arms from abroad, what type they should be. In other words a decision had to be taken whether the arms were needed only for the purpose of dealing with the border raids and for the maintenance of law and order within the State or was Hyderabad to get ready for a head-on collision with the Government of India if the worse came to the worst. There was divided opinion on this issue. My own feeling was that the Government of India would never take such an unwise step as to get involved in an armed aggression over Hyderabad. India was just born as an independent country. It had yet to establish its international position and could ill-afford to make a second Kashmir of Hyderabad. Besides, there was a great deal of difference between Kashmir and Hyderabad. There, the contesting parties were Pakistan and India and Kashmir was a matter of national prestige to India. The Government of India knew very well in their own hearts that Hyderabad would not and could not jeopardise India's position internally or internationally. They also knew full well that Hyderabad both on account of its geography and otherwise has in its own interest to be largely dependent on India and any coercion therefore would be totally unnecessary. In the face of these realities it was unthinkable for me that the leaders of India would go to the extent of defying world opinion

and get entangled in any armed aggression only to satisfy their vanity. I also believed that in the event of any aggression from India, Britain as a party to the undertakings given, could not remain a dumb spectator. I, therefore, gave my final verdict that the procurement of arms and ammunitions should be primarily for the purpose of warding off the raiders and for dealing with the situation of law and order within the State. This decision also simplified matters of procurement to a very great extent. Accordingly, through a special messenger the Agent General in London and later on, the one at Karachi were asked to immediately explore the possibilities for purchase of some fifteen to twenty thousand rifles and seven to eight thousand Tommy or Sten Guns and four to five million rounds of ammunitions. They were also advised to study the various alternatives for transporting the material direct to Hyderabad as early as possible.

I then turned my attention to the manufacture of the arms and ammunitions of a simpler type. Long before that, there was already a good deal of talk in the Indian press that Hyderabad was busy manufacturing arms and equipment of all kinds. When I talked with the Army Commander and his Ordnance Officers and asked them if they could undertake the job of manufacturing .303 rifles and ammunition, I found them all very enthusiastic but very unrealistic and inexperienced in their approach. Therefore, I pooled all the engineering and technical resources of the State and placed them at the disposal of the army Commander. I discovered that the job was too big for him and finally I decided to take upon myself the direction and co-ordination of the production programme. I insisted on simplification of the design; for the moment I was content with supplying the police and the civic guards with less efficient but sufficient numbers of weapons to enable them to face the raiders. The magazine part of the rifles was deleted and a single shot breach loading model of .303 rifle was evolved. Several small units of production were improvised overnight. Some produced standard type Sten guns and the rest were mainly engaged on drawing cartridge cases, making bullets and caps and on filling. The targets set for production were never even nearly achieved, but small quantities of small arms and ammunitions began to trickle out and find their way to the unarmed defenders of the borders.

CHAPTER XXI

FRESH THREATS FROM INDIA

It was early in the afternoon of March the twenty-sixth that I had a telephone call from Munshi, the Agent General of India. He had gone to Delhi for some time now with the agreement reached between him and myself over the several disputed issues between India and Hyderabad and was certain that he would secure the concurrence of the Government of India and return soon to follow the matter further. At the time of going, he had regarded the agreement arrived at as his personal diplomatic triumph. He had been away much longer than anticipated and I was not very hopeful of the outcome. Soon after his return he appeared very anxious, on the phone, to see me at the earliest possible opportunity. I told him he could come over right away. A little later he turned up. As he entered my room, he appeared somewhat hesitant and slightly nervous. I greeted him cordially and tried to make him feel more at ease. After the usual preliminary courtesies were over, he pulled out a large sealed envelope from his pocket and in a very ceremonious manner stated that he, the Agent General of the Government of India, on behalf of his Government, was presenting a letter to me, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad. I was taken aback a little by the gesture but soon recovered and received the letter with a smile. As I was receiving the letter, I remarked that it sounded like an ultimatum. He nodded but said nothing and sat up in the chair with folded arms. I tore open the envelope and glanced through the contents. It was a letter addressed to me by name and signed by V.P. Menon on behalf of the Government of India bearing the date 23rd March. It was a strong *de'marche* but was short of an ultimatum as no date had been set forth for the fulfilment of the demands presented. The demands included all the points over which agreements had been reached during the course of the various conferences at Delhi and included many new ones which had not been so far raised in any discussions or correspondence. They were all termed as fulfilment of the obligations on the part of Hyderabad under the

Stand-still Agreement. In addition, there was a demand for banning of the Ittehad—the only Muslim political organization in the country—and of winding up all its branches.

After I had read the letter, I made no comment but invited Munshi to stay for a cup of tea. He readily agreed and said he would welcome the opportunity of an informal and off the record talk. During the talks, Munshi progressively unfolded his mind and said that even though India had been termed a secular State, the fact could not be denied that it was primarily and essentially a Hindu State. From that point of view he felt that it was impossible for any Government in power at Delhi to allow the continuance of a State like Hyderabad right in its midst with a strong Muslim bias about it. He thought that the situation was still worse as the majority of the population happened to be Hindu and for centuries together they had been under one form or the other of Muslim rule. That, he frankly admitted, was the real issue at stake and the only way that it could be resolved was by completely absorbing Hyderabad into the folds of the Indian Union. The leaders of India, he thought, had been unduly slow and hesitant over presenting the real issue, but now he was glad that they had resolved to face it squarely and boldly. I asked Munshi if an armed clash was intended. He thought that from his own point of view there was no other solution and that he could not understand the hesitation on the part of the Indian leaders when it was so simple and easy. In support of his argument he stated that the armed clash would result only in the killing of a few thousand Muslims and about the same number of Hindus but that he felt was not a very high price to pay for the acquisition of Hyderabad. He said that India at the moment was entangled unnecessarily in the Kashmir conflict and was neglecting Hyderabad while in his own opinion they should wash their hands of Kashmir and concentrate on Hyderabad. He believed that it would not take long for the armies of India to conquer Hyderabad. That, he said, would also greatly help them to regain their lost morale in the Kashmir conflict. He believed, if there was further delay in taking military action then Hyderabad might get better prepared and, in course of time, may even become a major problem for India. Besides, he thought that Hyderabad might succeed in enlisting the sympathies of

the world and invoke the intervention of the United Nations which would greatly complicate matters from the point of view of the Government of India.

It was obvious that there could be only one object in the outspoken manner of Munshi and that was to impress upon me the seriousness of the attitude of the Government of India and to convince me that all was ready now for a military show-down from his side. I must have disappointed him when I told him that on my part, despite the full realization of the weak military position of Hyderabad, I would rather go down fighting than submit to such mean coercion; and that I meant every word of what I was saying. He pulled himself up and then with a twinkle in his eye told me that nothing would happen to me and that if I was less adamant, most likely I would even continue to be the Prime Minister of Hyderabad at the end of everything.

The conversation had not been a very pleasant one but all the same we parted with a smile and shake-hand. I immediately telephoned to the Nizam and told him that I wished to see him at once. A few minutes later I saw him and gave him a full account of the conversation that had taken place and presented to him the letter that had been received from Delhi. The Nizam after some thought advised me to prepare an *aide-memoire* of the conversation as he felt certain that Munshi, later, would deny many points of his statements. I accordingly dictated an *aide-memoire* and sent a copy to the Nizam. Admittedly the talks had been informal and off the record; yet such vital issues had been discussed and for the first time in such unreserved manner that the gist of conversation could not be left to memory alone. As it happened, the Nizam sent a copy of the memoire to Mountbatten with a private note so that he might realise how the minds of the Indian leaders were working which was so different to the assurances conveyed by Mountbatten from time to time. The perusal of the note must have made Mountbattan feel uncomfortable and he passed it on to Nehru and others for their information. Mountbatten himself had never been very happy over the choice of Munshi as Agent General for Hyderabad and had apprehended trouble right from the start. He was, however, too weak to take any action himself and as in all other matters he had to bow down to the will of

his masters even against his own conviction.

As anticipated by the Nizam but to my surprise Munshi when interrogated from Delhi denied several of the points covered in my note or at any rate took the attitude, "that was not what I meant" or "that is not exactly what I said". Of course, he very rightly accused me of recording an off the record conversation when he himself had not done so on that understanding. I must plead guilty to the breach of diplomatic courtesy and the Nizam by sending the copy of the *aide-memoire* to Mountbatten, even though privately, had placed me completely in the wrong. That apart, Hyderabad's own reading of the intentions of the leaders of India had been fully confirmed by an important personality in the field. There was no longer any doubt in the minds of any one in Hyderabad about the designs of the Government of India and the futility of hoping for a fair settlement. Still, would India eventually go to the extent of armed conflict? That, I still doubted. The international complications arising out of such an action would be too many and India could ill-afford to disregard the world opinion when she had yet to stabilize her newly acquired independence.

In reply to the *de'marche* received from the Government of India, Monckton drafted a most reasoned and well-worded document which was despatched to Delhi early in April that is about a week after the *de'marche* had been received. After a comprehensive survey of the situation the Government of Hyderabad, at the end of the note, expressed its very sincere hope that the suspicions and misgivings entertained by the Government of India would be removed and offered and solicited earnest understanding and co-operation. In case, however, the Government of India found themselves unable to see eye to eye with the Government of Hyderabad, recourse was suggested to the clause relating to arbitration in the Stand-still Agreement. Personally I was almost certain that the Government of India would never agree to arbitration, as before any impartial body the unreasonable and high-handed attitude of the Government of India would be exposed in a moment; yet, that was the only constitutional course that the Government of Hyderabad could suggest.

Along with my formal reply to the Government of India the

Nizam sent a spirited letter to Mountbatten. In the letter he said, "Information which has reached me in Hyderabad gives me reason to think that the letter addressed to my Prime Minister by your States Ministry was in the nature of an ultimatum to be regarded as an open breach of friendly relations. I am, therefore, making a final appeal to you to make use of your good offices to prevent such a contingency". He went on to say that there were difficulties in interpreting the obligations imposed by the Agreement and in ascertaining the obligations which are to be continued. Moreover the fact that the agreement specifically excludes paramountcy, so that whatever followed directly and exclusively from the relationship and was not covered by any agreement or administrative arrangement, no longer could be in force, which involved further complications. But these difficulties, he said, could be solved, as was contemplated in the agreement itself, by arbitration. The letter then went on to say how Hyderabad had fulfilled the undertakings given in the meeting of the fourth March between the representatives of the two Governments and referring to the supply of the arms and ammunition the Nizam said, "What had concerned me has been that, whereas the British regularly supplied me with arms and equipment, I have had no arms, equipment, or ammunition whatever for my forces or police since July 1947. I have constantly pressed your Government and Your Excellency on this subject but while your Government have objected to my getting my requirements from other sources, they have supplied me with nothing themselves, with the result that I have been gravely embarrassed both in training my troops and maintaining law and order". The Nizam then emphatically drew the attention of Mountbatten to the economic blockade and stated, "On many occasions I expressed to you through Sir Walter Monckton my apprehension that if I chose, as I had been assured I could, to remain independent, the Government of India would seek to coerce me into accession by an economic boycott or even finding some excuse to invade my territories. In paragraph two of your letter dated 12th August 1947 you used these words 'I learn that Your Exalted Highness is concerned lest a decision not in present circumstances to accede would be treated as a hostile act by the Dominion (of India) and your State be subjected to blockade, but I am satisfied that the

leaders of the new Dominion have no intention of applying such pressure". The Nizam's letter went on to say, "I must tell Your Excellency frankly that in spite of these assurances and in spite of the Stand-still Agreement, economic pressure has, in fact, been applied to Hyderabad with growing intensity from the time the British left. There is no manner of doubt, it is in full force today. Even medicines, medical stores and hospital requisites are being held up along with chlorine, for the water supply of my people". The Nizam added that there was plenty of documentary evidence of the blockade and many Britishers and other foreigners who had then visited Hyderabad would confirm it. The matter of blockade, he stated, was not seriously denied by any officers of the Government of India either.

The Nizam then very pointedly drew the attention of Mountbatten to the letter that he had written on the 9th July 1947, wherein the Nizam had basically stated his stand in regard to the future political situation in the sub-continent of India. He had made his resolve to remain independent quite clear and his intention not to join either of the two newly created Dominions. He had pointed out the constitutional position of Hyderabad and the obligations that the British had towards Hyderabad in virtue of the treaties and the prevailing practice, and had emphatically asked His Majesty's Government to take full account of the position of Hyderabad in dealing with the future of the Indian sub-continent. To this historic and important document the only reply that the Nizam had received from the Crown Representative, Lord Mountbatten, was that he had forwarded a copy of the Nizam's letter to His Majesty's Government and hoped to have a reply shortly. The reply, however, never came. The Nizam then stated that the manner in which he had been treated by the British Government and the new Government of India—and he did not propose to apportion blame—and the way he had been denied the fulfilment of the promise either to accede or to remain independent whichever he chose, he would let the world fully know. He then appealed to Mountbatten not to be a party to the imposition of pressure on him in the manner that was being done. There were rumours, he said, of posting Indian troops all along the borders of Hyderabad in large strength and asked the purpose of doing so and warned Mountbatten that if the policy

were to be persisted the peace of not only Hyderabad but the whole of the South of India would be endangered. The concluding paragraph of the Nizam's letter is worth reproducing in full. It read, "Last, the British without consulting me severed all the ties which bound my State to the King Emperor. Will Your Excellency not keep faith with me now? To break faith with the weak, causes perhaps less immediate disadvantage than to break faith with the strong, but assuredly in the end it brings its retribution. I hope Your Excellency will forgive me for this frank and honest expression of my feelings and sentiments".

This frank and outspoken letter must have given a rude shock to Mountbatten. He stood not only involved in person but also as the ex-Crown Representative. Of course, it was too much to hope that Mountbatten would be in a position to play any effective role even if he wished. What, however, was expected was that he would at least refrain from any active part in the insidious plans that the leaders of India appeared determined to execute. It was obvious that the Government of India were making good use of Mountbatten's position for their own purpose at the sacrifice both of his own personal position and of his standing as a member of the Royal family of Great Britain. It was also clear, for whatever the reason might be, that Mountbatten had allowed himself to be used as such. Would the possibility of the publication of the Nizam's letter act as a deterrent upon him and at least prevent him for the time being from playing an active role? Monckton thought that it would; I, myself, was of the opinion that it would not. The Nizam, however, felt that it was worth taking a chance. Monckton decided to take the letter himself and deliver it personally to Mountbatten.

It was on the morning of the 6th April that Monckton proceeded to Delhi. When he arrived there, he was surprised at the unusually cold and almost hostile reception meted out to him as the emissary of the Nizam. The probable date of his departure was no secret and Delhi had expected his arrival on or about that date. The authorities there were suspicious and not very happy over his visits. So, on the morning of the 7th April the Hindustan Times came out with a most fantastic story, prominently displayed, of a speech supposed to have been made by Qasim Razvi, the leader of the Ittehad party and the

Razakars. The bold headlines announced "QASIM RAZVI'S CALL TO JEHAD!" The speech was supposed to have been made during the course of some "HYDERABAD WEAPONS WEEK", before a mass rally of the Razakars on the 31st of March and was said to have been reported from Hyderabad on the 6th April. By some unaccountable coincidence, no copy of this particular issue of the Hindustan Times ever reached Hyderabad although quite a few copies of this paper used to arrive regularly by air mail each day. The first time the matter came to my knowledge was on the 10th of April when Monckton returned from Delhi with a copy of the publication. It was one of the most violent and offensive narrations imaginable about the Hindu culture and the Hindu religion. It may aptly be described as a brief summary of the observations of Katherine Mayo in her famous book "MOTHER INDIA". It said everything from the many headed Gods worshipped by the Hindus to the sacred values given to the cow dung and the cow's urine. Many of the inner details of the Hindu cult given therein were unknown to the average Muslim and I for one had never heard some of them. It is even doubtful whether Qasim Razvi himself had ever any knowledge of those rituals of the Hindu cult and even if he did, it was certain that he would never have uttered them, much less make them a theme of a public speech. The publication, though distasteful in the extreme, did certainly serve its purpose. It led to a great deal of indignation throughout Delhi and questions were asked in the Constituent Assembly. No one, however, seems to have ever thought that if there was any truth about the story at all how it was that a speech supposed to have been made before a mass rally of the Razakars became the sole property of the Hindustan Times and that after the lapse of over a week. No other paper throughout the length and breadth of India nor any of the numerous news agencies represented in Hyderabad had ever said a word about it.

In the tense atmosphere so created by the Hindustan Times in Delhi, there was little that Monckton could do. It was difficult for him even to secure a patient hearing from Mountbatten. It was not until much later when the representative of the London Times, who happened to be in Hyderabad on that particular date and had spent most of that day with Qasim Razvi himself, assured Mountbatten

personally that there had been neither a mass rally, nor was there anything like Hyderabad Weapons Week nor did Qasim Razvi make any speech that Mountbatten believed that the whole of the atrocious story published by the Hindustan Times was an entire fabrication.

On the return of Monckton when I saw the actual copy of Hindustan Times I immediately sent for the Police and Intelligence Chiefs and asked them to check over and report to me early if there had been anything at all of which the publication in the Hindustan Times might be an exaggerated version. I also engaged my other secret sources to thoroughly investigate and let me know the exact truth. The matter was further checked up with the representatives of the various news agencies and finally with Qasim Razvi himself. They all confirmed that what had been published was a complete fabrication. Monckton who had come back from Delhi considerably disturbed, lest there be some basis of which the publication in the Hindustan Times was an exaggerated account, now felt certain that it was all a planned attempt to prevent Monckton from influencing Mountbatten in any way. He aptly compared the Delhi methods with Hitlerian tactics and professed that in the circumstances where might was the only politics, there was little that he could do as a Constitutional Adviser. Later he communicated his feelings to the Nizam and expressed his inability to help the Nizam or the cause of Hyderabad in any way and decided to pack off to U.K. for good.

Monckton's reading of the situation had in no way been hasty. Prior to the World War II he had been in close association with the developments of the events in Europe and had carefully observed the terrorizing tactics that Hitler and his associates had been employing against the smaller powers such as Austria and Czechosolovakia. He had seen how the propaganda machinery had been perfected by Goebbles and how it had helped the German War Lords to carry out the war of nerves. His exposition of the case before the Nizam and others concerned in Hyderabad was very logical and clear. The leaders of India, he said, were set on absorbing Hyderabad into their folds and Hyderabad did not possess the physical means to resist the military might of India. The possibility of Great Britain intervening

in any way, under her treaty obligations, to lend effective support to arrive at any just and amicable settlement, after his recent experiences, appeared to him nil. He thought that Hyderabad had morally and constitutionally a very strong case for presentation to the U.N. but then he did not know if the U.N. machinery could be made to move fast enough to be of any practical value to Hyderabad, as India would concentrate all its might to make the issue of Hyderabad a *fait-accompli* long before U.N. is able to take up the matter for discussion. Under these circumstances he felt that it was for the Nizam and the people of Hyderabad alone to decide whether to submit to the pressure of India, no matter how unjust and immoral that be, or face the consequences of the invasion by Indian armies. He believed the temptation of applying their armed might was too great for the Indian leaders and whatever the people of Hyderabad and the Nizam ultimately might decide, it was important for them to bear that factor in mind.

CHAPTER XXII

MORE DOINGS AT DELHI

Mountbatten, in his reply to the spirited letter of the Nizam, apologised that he was no more than a constitutional Governor General and officially his views, therefore, could be no other than the views of his Government. He, nevertheless, thought that some useful purpose would be served if he conveyed what he described as his own reactions over the present situation. In the letter dated 8th April, he claimed to be speaking as a "friend of Hyderabad" and one who personally believed that constitutional monarchy was the best form of Government in this troubled world! Mountbatten shared the disappointment of the Nizam over the Stand-still-Agreement not working as smoothly as had been hoped. On the subject of economic blockade he said he was "satisfied that the leaders of the new Dominion have no intention of applying such pressure" and added that to the best of his knowledge "Pandit Nehru and other Ministers of the Central Government of India have in no way been a party to any policy of applying economic pressure on Hyderabad". He said that introduction of responsible government in the State was a necessary prelude to any long term agreement between India and Hyderabad.

On the issue of Nizam's communication to him of July, 1947, relating to the obligations of the British Crown under the existing treaties, Mountbatten wrote, "I have investigated this matter and it appears that the reason why a further reply was not sent lay in the error of the staff working in the Political Department here. Owing to enormous pressure under which all concerned were working at the time, it was possible for such an error to have occurred. That it should have happened in connection with so important a document is, I admit, unfortunate". By such a simple and innocent admission, he disposed of his own responsibility for such a major issue and with that all the legal and moral obligations of the British Crown. It was incredible that the British people or any government in power could act that way—yet that was the reply received from this highly placed

person over an issue which he had to deal in his capacity of "British Crown Representative". Concluding his letter Mountbatten emphatically stated "....let me tell you that, in the same way as you say that there is no intention of offensive action by Hyderabad against the Indian Union, there is no intention of offensive action by the Indian Union against Hyderabad".

It was obvious that Mountbatten had simply been made to sign the letter drafted by the concerned Departments of the Indian Government and he as usual was only too willing to ascribe his name regardless of the right or wrong about the contents of the document; regardless of what slur it brought on himself and on the prestige of the British people. Within a week of receiving this letter I was advised by our Agent General at Delhi that in view of the impending meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and the tense atmosphere prevailing, it would be a good thing if I visited Delhi and had a talk with the leaders of the Indian Union and he said that Nehru also felt that my visit at the juncture would be very desirable. So, with the blessing of the Nizam and God-speed from my colleagues in the Cabinet, Monckton and I proceeded once again to Delhi. On our arrival we found that the physical as well as the political temperature at Delhi was running high and my visit had aroused considerable excitement in the press and the public.

Soon after my arrival, my first interview was as usual with V.P. Menon. During the conversation which must have lasted well over two hours, the indefatigable V.P. patiently repeated the same old points about the inevitability of Hyderabad acceding to India and introduction of responsible Government in the State immediately. While V.P. had at least the satisfaction of liberally and continuously moistening his throat with large doses of sherry, there was nothing corresponding that I could use for the lubrication of my ear drums which were being beaten by the same jarring tune all the time. Menon kept on repeating the same tune over and over again with the enthusiasm of an amateur composer upon bored listeners. At the end he left me in a hurry as the time of my interview with Nehru was drawing close and V.P. had to post Nehru in advance of my reactions and the frame of mind I was in.

I had to wait for some time at Nehru's residence before he turned up. He had been addressing some public meeting. He must have also needed some time to get posted by V.P. As he entered the room, he seemed very much satisfied with himself over the fact that he had spoken almost without a stop for a full hour and twenty minutes and appeared very pleased over his performance. Nehru is an enthusiastic speaker and always measures his performance by the yardstick of time. I suggested out of courtesy that he might perhaps be exhausted and might like to talk business some time later. One of my objects in suggesting the postponement of the talks was to find out what he had pronounced about Hyderabad in his public speech. Politics in India often take a somewhat unusual course. The leaders are used to play to the gallery often and frame their policy afterwards according to the utterances they have advertently or inadvertently made. However, Nehru was not prepared to admit his exhaustion and said that he always felt exhilerated after a long speech. So we went on. Panditji appeared to be carried away by emotion and said he had only a few more years of active life left and was anxious to get on with the reconstruction of India and felt tired that, instead, his time was all being taken up with the numerous political issues that seemed to be cropping up from every side and gave him no opportunity to concentrate on the real aim of his life. Of these, he said, Hyderabad was no less important and if he could only secure the accession of Hyderabad all would go well.

I told Nehru that the Government of India had so far pursued the policy of coercion and pressure towards Hyderabad and had not succeeded but only complicated the matters further. I made a personal appeal to him to try a policy of friendliness for a while and see how Hyderabad reacts to it. I told him that with continued total blockade which had resulted even in salt famine it was difficult to expect Hyderabad to be in a mood to regard India a friend. His response was cold. He said he was not a party to the stoppage of salt and as usual promised to look into the matter. The blockade, he thought, was necessary for which, he said, Hyderabad had itself to blame. He then added that if all the large quantities of arms and ammunitions seized by the Indian Union on their way to Hyderabad had reached there, it would

have been a great catastrophe. I challenged Nehru if he could show me one single instance when a rifle or a round of ammunition had been actually found on its way to Hyderabad. He had no reply to give to that direct challenge. A little later, he burst out in fury and said if Hyderabad persisted in its refusal to accede, he would still more tighten the ring of blockade and make it impossible even for a blade of grass to enter Hyderabad. He then worked himself up to a high pitch of excitement and snapping his fingers in my face added, "I shall reduce Hyderabad to smithereens". I had never before been so abjectly conscious of the physical weakness of Hyderabad against the military might of India. One after another I swallowed the political as well as the personal insults hurled upon me. I thought there was no further use in continuing on in that strain and decided to break up the meeting. As I rose, I remarked that there appeared little hope of a peaceful settlement if a person like Nehru was in that frame of mind.

The Deputy Prime Minister of India, Vallabbhai Patel, was recovering from an attack of thrombosis and had for sometime been confined to bed. During the course of my visit I was anxious to make a courtesy call on him to enquire after his health. Despite his convalescence he appeared anxious to see me, and talk over the Hyderabad affairs. So, the following afternoon we met. He lay in bed; on one side was seated V.P. Menon and on the other side of the bed I took my seat. He looked poorly yet he was anxious to talk over with me the Indo-Hyderabad relations. Before we started, Menon came out with a report of some border incident in which Hyderabad side was stated to be as usual at fault. A deploring report from the Bombay Government had been introduced, as on all previous occasions, as a prelude to the conversation. In this respect Delhi appeared to have well developed the Hitler-cum-Goebbels tactics. There was no occasion in my experience when Delhi did not let a rabbit out of the hat to create a stir in the atmosphere in order to affect the nerves of the opposite party. Menon said that he, only an hour ago, had been informed over the telephone of the incident said to have taken place in the early hours of that morning. I regretted that I had had no report, so I was not in a position to discuss the matter in any manner.

A little later Menon left but Patel still continued to weave a big

theme over the report. He said that on account of the Razakar activities things had reached a point where it had become impossible to maintain law and order in the Indian Provinces surrounding Hyderabad. The only solution, he said, lay in Hyderabad's immediate accession to India. I told him very plainly that I saw no possibility of Hyderabad agreeing to accede to India, but I assured him that I would immediately look into the alleged incursions into the Indian territory from Hyderabad's side, and would take adequate measures in conjunction with the Provincial authorities of the Union to prevent any recurrences in future. The conversation then moved on to the fake report that had appeared in the Hindustan Times regarding the atrocious speech attributed to Qasim Razvi which had caused such needless and harmful stir in Delhi. Patel was insistent that his own careful and most reliable enquiries had thoroughly convinced him that the speech was actually delivered and in the manner reported in the Hindustan Times. He said that owing to the offensive nature of the speech the fact had been deliberately denied altogether. When I challenged his statement, Patel said if I was really so ill-informed of the happenings in the State, I had better resign and go out of office. Curiously enough, Patel at every stage of our conversation kept on suggesting that I should resign. I was somewhat embarrassed by this unconventional discourse. He frequently got excited and each time beads of sweat ran across his forehead which he kept wiping off every few minutes. The situation was extremely discomforting to me. Here I was facing a patient of heart disease who was continually working up his emotions. Signs of physical strain were already appearing on him and yet he persisted that I should stay on. I made up my mind to let him talk and say nothing at all and was on the lookout for the earliest opportunity to leave him without showing any discourtesy.

After what appeared to me a very long while I was able to leave Patel. His private Secretary, a pleasant looking young man, came to see me to my car. I casually remarked to him how embarrassing it was for me to face the heart patient who had engaged himself in such serious and nerve-straining conversation. The young man said that Patel was now alright and that I should have freely talked to him and indeed if the talks had not been conclusive he would be glad to fix up

another time for me the following day. I thanked him for the offer, but I did not wish to face the ordeal of dealing with a heart patient in bed another time.

A day or so later Nehru sat down once again to discuss with me the Indo-Hyderabad situation after a brief luncheon at his residence. He was emphatic that some progress should be made before the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay. I was one with him in his desire, but we could find no meeting ground. So far as responsible government in the State was concerned I told him that although it was a purely internal matter, I could yet give him the assurance that it was definitely in the making and the Nizam had already given his pledge to it. I even said he could quote me if he wished to if that helped matters in any way. But, the main difference over the issue of the political relationship between India and Hyderabad still remained unsolved. According to Nehru there was no alternative to Hyderabad acceding to India and to that I could on no account subscribe. Finally, we both agreed that for the present, every possible attempt should be made to prevent any further deterioration of the situation. I also promised that, in the meantime, I would request the Nizam to issue a 'Firman' (proclamation) reassuring the people of the immediate establishment of responsible government.

Later, in the course of a long conversation, I found Mountbatten all eager to resolve the Indo-Hyderabad tangle before leaving India. He was on this occasion in a more reasonable frame of mind and for the first time seemed to appreciate Hyderabad's view point also. One of the immediate steps he suggested to me was to broad-base my Cabinet by including certain number of Hindu members from the Hyderabad State Congress. This I had been wanting to do ever since I took over charge as the Prime Minister of Hyderabad and despite the desire on the part of a large number of Congressmen in Hyderabad, they had to remain out under threat from Delhi. One of them, a very prominent figure in their ranks had told me out of sheer disgust that the Hindus in Hyderabad were being tossed about by the leaders in India and the local Congress was afraid of displeasing them lest they found themselves dropped between two stools. He was very sick, also, of the leadership of the Hyderabad State Congress, but for the time being

was unable to play any important role himself. He and many others of his views were eagerly awaiting to see some agreement reached between Hyderabad and Delhi that would enable them to move forward. I, therefore, plainly told Mountbatten that if he could prevent Delhi from pulling strings in the opposite direction there would be no difficulty on my side in including the representatives of the Hyderabad Congress in the Cabinet. He agreed that it was a difficult situation, but undertook to do all he could to persuade the leaders in Delhi not to stand in the way of the Hyderabad State Congress Hindus from moving forward.

It is doubtful if Mountbatten ever summoned enough courage to seriously advise the overlords in Delhi to let the Hyderabad Congress break the deadlock; even if he did his efforts amounted to nothing. The Nizam on the other hand issued a 'Firman' as had been suggested by Mountbatten in which he emphatically appealed to all classes to adhere to the centuries-old communal harmony that had existed in the State. He cautioned the people against blindly imitating the movements in the rest of India and pointed out to them the disasters that had befallen them. He ordered immediate setting up of a committee for finalising the proposals for the establishment of responsible government at a very early date and advised the local Congress and other political elements that had not so far participated in the administration, to immediately join in and take their proper place in shouldering the responsibilities of running the State. He forwarded a copy of the 'Firman' to Mountbatten and only hoped that the Indian Congress leaders would not put any further spoke in the wheel and create more difficulties.

On my part, I was also hoping that the 'Firman' would pave the way for an early settlement of many outstanding issues. It was not long, however, before these hopes vanished. On April 24th, Nehru, before the All India Congress Committee, stated that so far as he could see, by compulsion of events both geographical and economic, Hyderabad would have to accede to India! He said there were only two courses open to Hyderabad "war or accession". Addressing another meeting on the 26th April he declared "The Government of India's patience in dealing with the issue of the Hyderabad State is on the verge

of being exhausted".

Nehru's pronouncements raised a storm of indignation the world over. From every corner his statements were compared with that of Hitler. He must have been seriously advised by the Indian diplomatic missions abroad of the reactions. Two days later he probably thought it fit to modify his previous statements and that he did in a curious manner. He said "the real question is that a certain section of the people of Hyderabad is committing hostile acts against the Government of India. We do not know if that section of the people represents the Hyderabad Government. We do not know if the Hyderabad Government are powerless to check it, or may be they do not desire to check it". He went on, "in either event, the time has arrived when this hostility must cease. If the Hyderabad Government cannot stop it, other measures will be adopted to stop it".

Despite the varying experiences with the leaders of the Indian Union such statements from no less a person than the Prime Minister of India came to us all as a very great surprise. Within two days of stating either 'war or accession' he had changed over the basis to the people of Hyderabad committing "hostile acts against Government of India". The following day I had to address the Hyderabad Legislative Assembly. In my review of the entire situation and pronouncement of the policy that the Government was following, I made it abundantly clear that Hyderabad had no reason of hostility towards the Indian Union. I stated that situated as we were, there was only one way for us and that was to be in close association with India. I also stated that both in our defence and foreign policy we would have to be dependent on India. At the time of drafting the speech I had felt that there should be left no shadow of any doubt in the minds of anyone inside or outside the State and so I made the position and the stand taken by the Government abundantly clear. I told my own countrymen very plainly that we had to face realities and it was good to know that we had to be friendly with India and that we must realise that any danger to the security of India would mean danger to our own existence and so, as much in our own interest we had to closely associate with India, so long as it was consonant with our dignity and our own traditions. I also made it clear to India that it would not pay her in

the long run to force her will upon Hyderabad particularly when Hyderabad was so anxious to offer and receive from India the most friendly terms. I said in no ambiguous terms that I was following the doctrines of Gandhi and was trying to maintain peace within and peace outside at any price; but, despite all these efforts on my part, if India still chose to follow an aggressive path and was determined to make a show of its military might, then Hyderabad despite its being no match to the armed strength of India would offer whatever resistance she was capable of.

Excepting the diehard Congress section in India my speech was very well received by all. Almost all the papers said that I was taking a very realistic view of the situation and that it was for India now to show a gesture of goodwill and come to some lasting understanding. Only, the official organ of the Congress Government—the Hindustan Times—put up a banner line that I had thrown a challenge to the Government of India.

Nehru still went about making the most contradictory statements. It may be recalled that on the 24th April he had stated that there were only two alternatives for Hyderabad, accession or war. On the 26th—only two days later—he had stated that everything else was secondary and the only thing that mattered was the immediate restoration of peace and tranquillity on the borders, and if not, the Government of India would adopt other means to ensure it. Yet, hardly five days later, on the first of May, addressing a press conference at New Delhi he presented a curious jumble of ideas. He said that there were only two courses open to Hyderabad, one was accession which would mean partnership in the Union and not subordination and the other was subsidiary association. He denied that he had used the expression "war" in his Bombay speech and what he had meant was "conflict". He stated that Indian Union could not possibly tolerate any place within or on its borders to be potentially capable of being turned into a foreign base. He emphasized that Hyderabad must necessarily form a part of the Indian Union. He then said that India had never thought of forcing any state into accession by military pressure and the Government of India was committed to let only the people of the state decide the issue by plebiscite or referendum and not

the army to decide the will of the people. In the same breath he said that the important issue at the moment was that of responsible government of Hyderabad as Hyderabad was the only State that was still autocratic and very backward socially and could not continue as such, after the rest of India had become democratic. He then spoke about the border incidents and thought that the matter of peace along the borders required priority of consideration. He said that a real economic blockade against Hyderabad would be a more serious matter and what was going on was only prevention of arms and other essential articles of war finding their way into the State. He concluded that in their enthusiasm, some of the officials of the Government of India may have been stopping other things as well. Someone questioned him if the Government of India would relax their demand for accession, if Hyderabad were to comply with other demands. He was irritated and said that there were only two alternatives which he had already stated, namely accession or subsidiary association. In either case, he said, Hyderabad would have to make over its defence and foreign affairs and communications to the Government of India.

The pronouncements of the Prime Minister of India were a curious jumble of words and thoughts. Enquiries made in official circles as to what was meant by subsidiary association brought no clarification. A few days later I had an occasion to ask V.P. Menon if he could clarify the phrase but even he did not know it and said that Pandit Nehru alone could answer the question. Nehru himself, of course, evaded any clarification with a certain amount of discomfort and embarrassment to himself.

It was obvious that all the talks of Nehru were purely aimed to confuse the world opinion which he knew was hardening. His other colleagues headed by Patel little cared about the outside reactions and were only concerned with the early occupation of the State by any means.

CHAPTER XXIII

A TEST OF THE NIZAM

Early in May, Mountbatten sent a personal invitation to the Nizam to visit Delhi. It was a crude plan of the little Hitlers at Delhi who thought it might work. The Nizam knew it full well and probably so did Mountbatten that once in Delhi he would be made to remain there until he signed on the dotted line. When I met the Nizam, he handed over to me Mountbatten's letter to read. He silently watched me reading the letter and then just as I was about to finish he made over another paper—a draft he had himself prepared in reply. I read the draft but made no comment. Apparently the Nizam had thought over the matter well and was in no mood to invite any comment. On my part I had no basic alteration to suggest in the reply drafted by him and therefore said nothing.

The Nizam in his letter very politely expressed his inability to accept the invitation and reiterated his own standing invitation to Mountbatten to visit Hyderabad before his departure from India. It was known already that despite Mountbatten's anxiety to visit Hyderabad he had not been permitted by his overlords at Delhi. When the Nizam's letter reached Delhi, it greatly infuriated the Indian leaders. They started a propaganda campaign that the Nizam was no more a free agent and that he was simply a captive in the hands of the Razakars and that the Government were instrumental in holding him in captivity. Such was the intensity and the effect of the propaganda that Mountbatten decided to satisfy himself by sending out to Hyderabad a personal representative to see things for himself and report to him direct. So, towards the middle of May came down to Hyderabad one of his trusted associates—Campbell Johnson—who had served with him in the very thick of the World War II and during some very critical moments. The insidious propaganda of Delhi was making me also feel uncomfortable and in my own heart I welcomed the arrival of Mountbatten's personal emissary to see things for hinself and carry first hand information back to Delhi and to Mountbatten.

The Nizam, however, felt differently. He had been equally annoyed by the propaganda but was sore that Mountbatten should have felt it necessary to send a personal representative to satisfy himself. His first reaction was to take no notice of Campbell Johnson, but on my persuasion he agreed to see him. My further advice that he should meet him on his own did not succeed and he decided that I should be present on the occasion. Campbell Johnson was glad at the opportunity of meeting the Nizam but seemed a little disappointed when he learnt that I would also be present. Mountbatten he said had hoped that he would be given the opportunity of meeting the Nizam alone.

May afternoons in Hyderabad are very oppressive and the Nizam is no believer in artificial cooling or air conditioning. So, Campbell Johnson sat facing both the heat of the day and the fire of the Nizam's talk. So outspoken was the Nizam that afternoon that even I, despite my close association with him, was surprised and felt completely embarrassed. He was apparently waiting to convey his personal feelings, suppressed for long, to Mountbatten and that he did fully. At the end of the meeting the Nizam asked me what I thought of the conversation. I told him hesitantly that in my opinion he was unduly outspoken. He said that was precisely what he wished to do and it was for that reason that he wanted me to be present!

Campbell Johnson then went round meeting people and visiting places. He even made a hurried tour of the border areas and saw for himself some of the devastation that was caused by the armed raiders from the Indian Union. His visit was severely criticised later by a section of the Congress press in India and Mountbatten's authority to send a personal representative was challenged. Of course, it was not expected that Campbell Johnson's visit would in any way alter matters so far as the Indo-Hyderabad relations were concerned but it certainly had one effect: Mountbatten from now on believed that the Nizam was very much himself and in full control of the situation and that whatever stand the Government of Hyderabad had taken was in full conformity with his own wishes.

With a view to bring to an end the duel of charges and countercharges between India and Hyderabad, I had on the 5th April addressed a long letter to the Prime Minister of India and at the end of it asked

for referring to arbitration all the disputed points in accordance with the terms of the Stand-still Agreement which governed the Indo-Hyderabad relations. No reply to this letter was received till after the middle of May. Then it arrived in the form of another strong *demarche* from the State Ministry and was just short of ultimatum.

Hyderabad was accused of deliberate disregard of the spirit of the Stand-still Agreement and after levelling several fresh charges the Government of India expressed its inability to agree to refer the disputed issues to arbitration on the grounds that the points of disputes were far too many and it would take all the period that was left over of the Agreement before any award from arbitration could be obtained.

The letter went on accusing the Government of Hyderabad of actively supporting the Razakar organisation and of terrorizing the majority community of the State and of creating disturbances at the borders and of carrying on virulent propaganda against India. Expressing the regrets of the Government of India over the attitude of Hyderabad it said, "While failing to implement the Stand-still Agreement your Government have unequivocally declined so much as to discuss the question of accession; and in spite of assurances, they have also declined to announce the grant of responsible government in the State". Hyderabad was further accused of maintaining the closest relations with Pakistan and of endangering the tranquillity of South India and of disturbing the communal relations in the whole of Southern India!

The Stand-still Agreement between India and Hyderabad had been concluded for one year, making full provision for referring any disputed matters to arbitration and Hyderabad had demanded arbitration when there were as many as eight months yet to go. It took the Government of India no less than six weeks to answer to the letter of Hyderabad and the only ground they could find to turn down the demand for arbitration was insufficient time—when more than half the period of the agreement was still ahead.

In my reply to the letter, addressed to the Prime Minister of India, I had no difficulty in refuting the numberless false charges levelled against Hyderabad and insisted upon the demand already made for referring all the disputed points early to an independent arbitration. I

summed up my long letter with four main points. Firstly, that Hyderabad earnestly desired to maintain the most friendly and cordial relations with the Indian Union; secondly, that Hyderabad was anxious to settle all the points of difference by friendly negotiations but if that was not possible, then the matter must be immediately referred to arbitration; thirdly, the Razakars were not a private army but small groups of people who had organized themselves all over the country to defend their lives and properties against armed raiders from outside Hyderabad and certain disturbing elements within and that Hyderabad was only too eager to co-operate fully with the surrounding Provinces in the Indian Union to restore order early in the border areas; and fourthly, that Hyderabad was prepared to enter immediately into a reciprocal arrangement to control the press and radio and to adopt other means to prevent propaganda damaging the Indo-Hyderabad relations. In conclusion I stated "I feel sure that I am one with you in believing that it would be extremely unfortunate for all concerned if feelings over Indo-Hyderabad relationship are allowed to continue to run high. There is no justification for harbouring the suspicions now current. Steps like the intensification of economic blockade and the cutting off the supply of essentials of life, such as those mentioned above (meaning thereby medical supplies and other essentials of daily life), and now according to the latest reports, common salt, cannot help to bring about the mutual understanding which is so vitally necessary. Hyderabad is aware of the power and resources of the Indian Union and I would emphasise again, had no reason whatsoever to regard any of India's actions "as a sign of weakness". "Given the opportunity, Hyderabad is anxious to become India's faithful friend, useful ally and helpful neighbour. Why then should India regard Hyderabad with suspicion and try to make her very existence difficult? The Indian Union came into existence with noble aspirations and high ideals. It would not be in keeping with those lofty aims for India to pursue the present policy against Hyderabad and to reject the hand of friendship which Hyderabad offers in all sincerity".

Some time later, on the emphatic advice of Hyderabad's Agent General at Delhi I proceeded again to Delhi. The time for the departure of Mountbatten had been approaching fast and everyone in

Hyderabad was anxious to have the tangle resolved in some equitable manner. At the time of my departure the Nizam sent a personal telegram to Mountbatten expressing his earnest hope once again that apart from his position as Governor General he, as a member of the Royal family of England, would contribute to an equitable and fair understanding between India and Hyderabad.

When I arrived at Delhi on the 23rd May, Mountbatten was away and was not expected back till a couple of days later. The first question that I asked our Agent General on my arrival was if any thing new had sprung up in the press or in the Government circles in the usual manner to coincide with my visit. He said there had. In precise accordance with Hitlerian tactics the Goebbels at Delhi always kept in reserve or invented one thing or another to surcharge the atmosphere whenever any meeting was in the offing. Each time the spokesman of the Government of India would then emphasize how difficult it was for them to hold the situation any longer and the only alternative to invasion of Hyderabad by the armed forces of India was immediate accession of Hyderabad to the Indian Union. On this occasion, the theme was woven around an alleged attack on the Bombay-Madras express train which runs for a part of its route through the territory of Hyderabad. It was also said that some three men of the Indian army had been detained by the Hyderabad Police. A tremendous fuss had been made over these incidents. I am not certain if the incidents had not been planned ahead and engineered for the occasion. However, there was enough material for V.P. Menon to build up an awe-inspiring theme and to convey that the Government of India could no longer defer the accession of Hyderabad and that the Fuhrers at Delhi had made up their minds and decided that it should be done forthwith. Through other sources I came to know that just about that time the Indian armies on the Kashmir front had suffered some serious reverses and Delhi was eager to find something quick to divert the agitated public mind. And, Hyderabad issue was so handy and a convenient target to focus public attention.

My talks with Nehru and others led to nothing constructive or tangible. The only thing new that I discerned was that every one who mattered now believed that the Nizam was really an effective person

and it was not all the making of the ministers or a few political leaders. This was apparently the result of the visit of the personal envoy of Mountbatten to Hyderabad. Mountbatten at a later stage admitted that any doubts he might have had that the Nizam was not acting as a free agent were now once and for all dispelled.

Mountbatten on his return to Delhi lost no time to start conversations with me. This time he appeared better informed than before about the Hyderabad affairs and was taking a more realistic view of the whole situation. He said that now that the time for his departure was drawing close he was anxious that some settlement should be soon reached. He still thought that accession would be the best solution but agreed that Hyderabad in its present mood could not give in over the point of accession and something would have to be devised outside the scope of accession if any business was meant. I told him he would not find me failing in agreeing to any honourable solution and I would do all that lay in my power to bring about an immediate settlement. He was very keen that he should see the matter settled before he left and painted a gruesome picture before me as to what would happen after he had gone if the situation was left unresolved. He said that the Indian leaders were itching for military occupation of Hyderabad and it was he who had been holding them back. He believed that not long after he had gone the Government of India would find some excuse or other and advance their troops. He thought they would make enough propaganda against Hyderabad the world over so as to justify their aggression and told me as compared with Hyderabad the resources of the Government of India were a hundred times more effective and far and wide. He said that India had the advantage of being a member of the U.N. and therefore in a much better position to establish their case no matter how justifiable and morally strong the cause of Hyderabad was. He was also certain that the Government of India would try to make the issue of Hyderabad a *fait-accompli* even before the U.N. was in a position to intervene. He was not certain which way the British vote would go, but most likely he thought it would be in favour of India as Britain would not risk losing its association with India for the sake of Hyderabad. He then started describing how the numerous tanks left over by the British

would start over-running the territory of Hyderabad and how helplessly the Hyderabad army with their rifles would stand before the march of tanks and get mowed down by their heavy gun fire and by incessant bombing and machine gunning. He predicted that the Nizam himself would be made a captive and even if India, out of regard for world opinion, did not put him behind bars it would make a virtual prisoner of him. He felt of course that I and my colleagues would all be shot dead at the first instance. The upshot of the nerve racking episode was that any further resistance on my part was in vain and that before he left he was ready to do something that would not at least amount to accession in form: if Hyderabad did not agree then it would meet the fate that the Indian leaders had fully planned well in advance.

Mountbatten thought that although he personally had the fullest faith in my own sincerity of purpose, the leaders of India were very distrustful of me from their point of view. They believed, he said, that my sympathies and inclinations were all for Pakistan and that their belief was confirmed by the fact that I had at one time represented Pakistan, as its delegate, at the United Nations. He therefore felt that my resignation would to a very great extent lay at rest the minds of the Indian leaders. I told Mountbatten that if my resignation in any way helped build up better relationship between India and Hyderabad and the cause of Hyderabad, I would not stay one minute longer in office. At the same time, I told him that I would be the last man to let my countrymen down if they needed my services or my blood. I told him that I would convey every word of what he had said to me to the Nizam and to my colleagues in the Government and might also submit my resignation. But, I made it very clear to him that if the Nizam and the people of Hyderabad believed that I would be doing a disservice to the cause of Hyderabad by quitting, I would be the last person to leave.

Late that night, I pondered over all that Mountbatten had said. Curiously enough I did feel a little demoralised that day—a thing that I had never before experienced. I then resolved to submit my resignation to the Nizam immediately after my return to Hyderabad. If that could secure a solution of the complex tangle in which Hyderabad

was enmeshed, nothing would be simpler. In the meantime, it was difficult for me to take any decisive stand during the conversations. I was not certain if after my relinquishment of the office the policy as now laid down by the Nizam would in any way be altered. I was undergoing strange psychological strains. It is surprising, how a personal issue cunningly presented can cloud one's mind and vision. Thinking back, I sometimes wonder if it was not a deliberate and well calculated move of Mountbatten to cloud my mind for the time being over the major issues.

Delhi seemed to be convinced by now that the presence of Munshi at Hyderabad had been of little value and had led to a great deal of misunderstanding and trouble to both sides. Mountbatten told me that it had been agreed that Munshi should soon be replaced by some more appropriate person at an early date and I was in confidence informed of one or two names that the Government of India had under consideration for the post.

The discussion with Mountbatten developed by stages and ultimately it was suggested that if the Government of India could secure assurances of parallel legislation in matters of defence and foreign affairs they would be prepared to enter into mutually satisfactory arrangement with Hyderabad. Here was some basis for agreement and I undertook to examine the matter in that light. The Government of India's next demand of overriding powers of legislation in regard to defence, foreign affairs and communications meant in other words accession to India which I declined to consider. I was anxious to satisfy the Government of India that Hyderabad meant to offer its fullest co-operation on all the three subjects, namely, defence, foreign affairs and communications, and to give every reasonable assurance to that effect but to give India overriding powers of legislation simply amounted to accession in its worst form. As an alternative it was then suggested that the Nizam's Government should undertake to immediately legislate on the same lines as Government of India on these subjects without any right of deviation on its own part. Although it amounted to almost the same thing, I agreed to it only as a last resort to resolve the deadlock. I felt that the high price demanded would have to be paid by us if it could secure the integrity of Hyderabad and not damage its

other interests materially.

I also held the view that situated as it was, Hyderabad must share the responsibility of the defence of India with the Indian Union and accordingly offered to place a substantial part of the Hyderabad armed forces at the disposal of the Government of India in the event of any external aggression. The minds of the spokesmen of the Government of India, however, were working on a different plane. They were not thinking in the same unreserved terms as the representatives of Hyderabad were. They were more anxious to set up statutory limit on the armed forces of Hyderabad than to count on any help from it in any emergency. While Hyderabad was eager to make itself a close friend and ally of India, Delhi was determined to treat Hyderabad as an unfriendly State that should be liquidated and be wiped out as soon as possible.

The final basis, sketched out as a result of prolonged discussions, were that there should be an arrangement for legislation in the State of Hyderabad on lines similar to India in matters of defence and foreign affairs and communications. The size of the regular armies of Hyderabad should be limited to an overall strength of twenty thousand and of the irregular troops to eight thousand. I had made it very clear to both the Governor General and to the Prime Minister of India that I would be prepared to take the terms over to Hyderabad and recommend them for acceptance to the Nizam, only if the economic and internal stability of Hyderabad was in no way affected: Hyderabad had to have the fullest measure of freedom both in inland and overseas trade and currency and all fiscal matters. I was agreeable to transact all foreign exchange business through the medium of the Reserve Bank of India, as long as it was operated under a separate head and was exclusively controlled by Hyderabad. Likewise, the internal post and communications of Hyderabad were to continue as independent institutions. I reaffirmed the attitude of Hyderabad that Hyderabad would not claim an absolute independent political entity for itself if the proposed agreements were to be concluded between the two Governments but would look to the Government of India to assist in securing for Hyderabad the membership of such specialised agencies of the United Nations as the International Food Organization, Health Organization

and the International Monetary Fund. Nehru thought that there would be no difficulty in that respect and it was even felt that such membership would even be a matter of indirect help to India.

The one difficult question was of the form of Government in Hyderabad. None knew better than Mountbatten and Nehru that the internal affairs of Hyderabad had been made a propaganda platform by the Government of India for the sake of convenience. It was purely an internal matter, but since we were talking in a friendly atmosphere I had no hesitation in assuring that the entire mode of the Government of Hyderabad was intended to be changed within six months. Had the relations in India between the various communities not been so tense there would have been no need in Hyderabad for the minority Muslim community to worry over constitutional safeguards. But, as things stood, the minority community demanded strong safeguards which could not justifiably be denied—not at least till a more favourable atmosphere prevailed between the two communities. Under the circumstances, the only solution was to place the entire responsibility of the administration in the hands of a Government that would for the time being consist of the Muslims and the Hindus in equal numbers. I told Nehru that, if the leaders of the Indian Government had not been advising the Hyderabad State Congress to keep out and not accept any solution, the internal problem of Hyderabad would have been solved long ago. The attitude of the Government of India in interfering with the internal affairs of Hyderabad from behind the scene was unfortunately mainly responsible for the widening of the gulf between the two communities of Hyderabad. Nehru, however, was insistent that the Muslims should satisfy themselves with a minority position in the Government and the legislature as he could not go back on the promises that had been made to the Hyderabad Hindus by the Congress leaders in India.

As I have said before Delhi had, on this occasion, scored a psychological advantage over me by suggesting that I was one of the obstacles in arriving at an understanding between Hyderabad and Delhi. It, therefore, became difficult for me to finally accept or reject any proposal until I had the entire situation talked over with the Nizam and the rest of my colleagues in the Cabinet. I, therefore, informed Mount-

batten and Nehru that I would have to go and talk over the matters at Hyderabad and then return at an early date to resume the discussions.

Delhi is a curious place and one has to experience the political atmosphere there to be able to believe the mentality and psychology of the leaders of the Indian Government. There are currents and counter-currents mostly of a very low order of intelligence. Most of the foreign diplomats feel that it will take a long time before India can politically and administratively settle down and if it had to settle down, then the leaders would have to rise up to a higher level of public morality and develop a broader outlook on life. A rumour current in responsible quarters in Delhi at the time of my visit was that the Nizam had on the payment of some fabulous price out of his phenomenal wealth, secured some atom bombs and fleet of aeroplanes with which he would be able to blast out a number of large cities of India, in the event of a conflict. That they said was the only reason why the Hyderabad delegates were able to stand out against the threats and the coercion of the Government of India. There were also rumours that the Nizam had entered into some secret pacts with some of the major powers outside and they were providing him the moral force with promises of material help when needed. It is difficult to say whether the top leaders of the Indian Government entertained such notions too, but certainly many of the next in order did! And, despite all that they professed about non-violence none from top to bottom could for a moment visualise that moral force was also a factor to reckon with in the mortal human life. There were a few people who had appreciation of the moral values in life but they were throttled down at the point of bayonet.

CHAPTER XXIV

PLEBISCITE ON THE ANVIL

I was glad to get out of the tense atmosphere of Delhi after a completely nerve racking time. On most of the previous occasions I had the advantage of the pleasant company of Sir Walter and Lady Monckton. On this one, not only was I deprived of that pleasure but also of a certain sense of personal safety that their company brought in its wake. Mountbattens had made it their personal concern to ensure the safety of Moncktons by sending one of their trusted ADCs in advance to make sure that all was well with the plane in which they were to travel. The significance of that precaution was brought to my mind by our Agent General at Delhi when he asked my permission to send one of my ADCs in advance and insisted that he should not only examine the plane carefully, but also should take it out on a short trial flight before I embarked. At first I ridiculed the idea but finally submitted to his insistence. He knew things at Delhi better than I did!

The Nizam had been anxiously awaiting my return and it was not very long after I had landed at the airport that I was closeted with him reporting every detail. There were important constitutional issues at stake. We both felt that Monckton's presence at this juncture would be of immense help. I had already sent Monckton a cable requesting him to pay an early visit to Hyderabad and the Nizam followed by a personal cable insisting that he should try and reach Hyderabad immediately.

The Nizam was positively annoyed and greatly perturbed when I told him that Mountbatten felt that the leaders in Delhi looked upon me with great suspicion and that if I were to be out of the way it might ease their minds and might pave the way to a better understanding between India and Hyderabad. I, therefore, pressed the Nizam to accept my resignation immediately as I believed that settlement of the differences with India was a matter of greater importance than anything else. But I only received in reply a strong rebuke from the Nizam. He said that neither he nor the public of Hyderabad would

tolerate any change of the kind at such a critical juncture. The only grounds, the Nizam said, on which he could accept my resignation would be if I felt myself in personal danger and wanted to give up the responsibility on that account. In that event, he said, I should make my reasons very clear which in turn he would publish at the time of accepting my resignation. I assured the Nizam that my insistence was solely and purely in the interest of Hyderabad and not for any personal consideration and that at no time would he find me shirking the responsibility. He then drew up a pad and wrote a strongly worded personal letter to Mountbatten and said that despite my insistence he had refused to accept my resignation or to relieve me and felt hurt that any suggestion of that nature should have emanated from Mountbatten!

Fama nihil est celerious proved to be very true. On my alighting from the plane, I had dropped a mild hint to some of my colleagues who had come to receive me at the airport of the possibility of my relinquishing my office. Within an hour or two the rumour had gone round like wild fire and when I returned to my office after the interview with the Nizam I was inundated with visitors and personal messages from all shades of opinion including some of the prominent leaders of the Hyderabad State Congress. They were all unanimous that I would be doing the greatest disservice to all the communities of the State if I were to press my resignation. Thereafter, I talked no more of resigning and started working with fresh energy. It was not until that night that I realized what a demoralizing effect during the previous couple of days Mountbatten's suggestion had upon my way of thinking and actions.

There was a real anxiety on the part of every one in Hyderabad to arrive at a settlement with the Government of India this time. The proposals of the Government of India that I had brought embodied a limitation on the strength of armed forces in Hyderabad and a certain amount of indirect control of India over them. In the realm of foreign affairs, I had conceded that the control over the political relations with other powers would vest in Government of India. It was my belief that without an independent defence policy, any claim to an independent political relationship with the outside world was meaningless. Fullest safeguard, however, was envisaged for economic and

fiscal independence; otherwise the Government of India could at any time make the very existence of the State impossible. It had further been agreed that on no account there should be either directly or by implication, any assumption of paramountcy by India over Hyderabad either then or at any time in the future. Hyderabad was to allow stationing of Indian troops in any part of the State, when India was engaged in any external war. Being the weaker partner of the two contracting parties, I had insisted and made provision that in the event of any disagreement between the two Governments either party could demand reference of any dispute to an independent arbitration, as had been provided in the Stand-still Agreement that subsisted between Hyderabad and India. There was, however, difference over one issue: The Government of India had asked for an unofficial understanding over the representation of Muslims in the Hyderabad legislature to be not more than forty percent of the strength of the House and a compromise may have been possible at forty-five percent. The Muslims in Hyderabad, however, felt that till such time at least as the situation cleared up there should be parity.

It was nice of Moncktons to set aside all their engagements and rush to Hyderabad as fast as they could. Almost from the moment they arrived, Monckton set himself to prepare a draft agreement, bearing all the time in mind that the terms should be such as to meet the wishes of the overlords at Delhi and yet secure the absolutely minimum safeguards needed for Hyderabad. The draft was discussed at great length by the Council of Ministers and was finally passed and received the assent of the Nizam. On the seventh of June, a three-man delegation then proceeded to Delhi; myself at the Head, the Deputy Prime Minister, Pingle Venkat Rama Reddy (a Hindu) and Raoof (an Ittehadi) with Monckton as constitutional adviser.

While Hyderabad was busy preparing the draft agreement, Nehru had gone about making all sorts of contradictory statements in his various speeches. Addressing a mass meeting at Ootacamund on the second of June, he was reported to have said that "We have made it perfectly clear to Hyderabad that there will have to be a solution and that ultimately there must be accession". He further said that in the existing set up there would have to be a responsible Government in

Hyderabad. In another place he uttered, "We do not propose to make Hyderabad accede by coercion. We may be compelled to do so if the situation were such as to imperil India's security". As an example of such a situation he illustrated "if Hyderabad was being used as a base for operation by any enemy state." In another speech at Delhi on the sixth of June he stated "An independent State right in the middle of India would be dangerous for our own defences". He went on to say that for dealing with Hyderabad the Government of India had strengthened their armies and at the same time they were consistently endeavouring to end the deadlock in a peaceful and friendly way. He was making all these pronouncements when the draft of the heads of agreement was under the consideration of the two governments. Deputy Prime Minister Patel at the time was, of course, supposed to be convalescing at Dehradun to recoup from his heart attack; nevertheless he was constantly in touch with all the developments regarding Hyderabad and no decision could be taken without his concurrence either by the Prime Minister Nehru, or the rest of his cabinet.

On the afternoon of June seventh I had a long heart to heart talk with Mountbatten. He seemed to believe that the entire Hindu population in Hyderabad was for accession to India and that a small Muslim minority stood in the way of the majority in carrying out their wishes. He insisted that the deadlock that had come in should be resolved in a proper democratic way and that like every other place there should be a referendum and it was only for the people concerned to give their final verdict on whether Hyderabad should accede to India or should remain independent. This was a totally new approach to the problem and I had no instructions from the Nizam or any mandate from my Government in that regard. At the same time I was determined to resolve the tangle and personally believed that after all it was only the people of the country who could finally decide their own future. I could never believe that freedom was in any way less dear to the bulk of the Hindu population of Hyderabad than to their Muslim brethren. If I was right, I felt, why should not the fact be established once and for all before the world? On the other hand, if my knowledge of the feelings of my own countrymen was incorrect and my reading of the minds of the majority Hindu community was wrong,

then no one had any right to stand in their way. Taking all things into consideration, I resolved that regardless of the outcome, let there be once and for all a settlement along the lines suggested by Mountbatten which would be for the ultimate good of all.

My consent to the principle of a fair referendum under independent control came as a big surprise to Mountbatten. He was completely taken aback and then added that he had made the proposal without having been briefed by his Government; nevertheless he said that the principle was so sound and universally acknowledged as fundamentally democratic that no one could possibly take any objection to it. He then sent for his conference Secretary and started dictating the minutes of the meeting. At the very outset he made it clear that he had been speaking without having been briefed by his Government and then went on with the text. To avoid any possibility of mis-interpretation, the minutes drafted by Mountbatten's own Secretariat are reproduced below:

(a) "It was generally agreed that the holding of a plebiscite in Hyderabad on the issue whether the State should accede to India or remain independent, was the obvious ultimate solution.

(b) "It was pointed out that whatever be the advantage of plebiscite as a long term settlement, no such settlement would be worth the paper it was written on unless goodwill was immediately re-established between India and Hyderabad. Therefore, the only basis on which it was possible to work was that an interim settlement which would restore friendship should also be reached.

(c) "There were certain points that India could contribute to such a short term settlement:

1. The replacement of certain personnel.
2. A visit by the Governor General to Hyderabad.
3. The lifting of the present so-called 'blockade' and arrangements for the positive movement of goods into Hyderabad to be re-commenced immediately.

(d) "So far as Hyderabad's contribution to a short-term settlement and the re-establishment of good relations was concerned, the

most important step would be the formation of a completely new Government on a parity basis. It was recognized that although the Government of India might have difficulty in agreement to parity it was impossible for Hyderabad to go beyond this. But this reconstruction of the Government would have to be genuine; it would involve the dissolution of the present Government and the formation of a new one, although certain Ministers in the present Government might be appointed to the new one.

(e) "The New Government might consist of twelve (possibly ten) seats. Half the number including the portfolio of the Prime Minister, would be allocated to the major community; and there should be an equitable distribution of portfolios. In order to achieve representation of the existing legislature to the new Government, two of the six seats allocated to the Hindus might be given to the members of the present legislature; similarly the Muslim representation might include one or two who were not members of the Ittehad.

(f) "Hyderabad intended to form a new Constituent Assembly, elected on a broad based franchise and on parity basis, within two or three months. When this had been formed, if it truly reflected the two major communities, it might act temporarily as the legislature.

(g) "It was agreed that the present legislature would not be called until the Constituent Assembly was formed and was sitting.

(h) "The question arose as to what should be the controlling authority for this plebiscite. It was generally agreed that it would be desirable for the plebiscite to be run by an outside body. It was pointed out that the Government of India might well, but for the recent events in connection with Kashmir, have agreed to the selection of the United Nations Organization. But this was improbable in the present circumstances. Other possibilities were:

1. The Commonwealth.
2. A small panel of Judges from the permanent court

of International Justice, or

3. A Commission from a completely neutral country such as Switzerland or Sweden.

(i) "So far as preparations for a plebiscite were concerned there should be free speech, freedom of the press and free access to the radio for all parties within Hyderabad. There might, with advantage, be a gentleman's understanding that neither party would attack or vilify the other, but confine itself drawing attention to the advantages which the course of action which it represented offered. No Government and no Government-sponsored organization would spend any money on electioneering or in bribery of any sort prior to the plebiscite. There would be no interference by any party or organization from outside the State."

The above was the full text of the basis settled between Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India and myself, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad.

I had gone well beyond the authority that was vested in me, in giving my consent to these proposals, but that appeared to my mind the only democratic basis which could stand any test of any fair judgment and the world opinion. I was convinced that if the claim of Hyderabad to remain independent could not stand the test then the claim was in vain. I left the meeting only a little nervous about the reactions the proposals might give rise to in certain quarters in Hyderabad but otherwise felt morally convinced that the decisions arrived at were honest and fair and made myself determined to face all consequences in implementing them.

The proposals, however, completely stirred the political circles in Delhi. First, there was surprise that I should have consented to the oft repeated demand of the leaders of India to settle the issue by a plebiscite. On second thought the leaders of India felt nervous as to what might happen in the event of the plebiscite going against India. Finally, they concluded that the issue was such that India could take no risk whatsoever. Nehru was stated to have shown great concern over this new development and those at the top in Delhi put their heads together to find some way out of the agreement arrived at by the Governor

General.

Walter Monckton who was still busy giving finishing touches to the draft heads of agreement felt that I had taken a very bold step in agreeing to the issue being decided by a free plebiscite and wondered if it was not going against the procedure laid down by the British Cabinet Plan according to which it was the Ruler of a State that had to decide the issue. I told him that in my view the theme of the Indo-Hyderabad relations had gone beyond the realm of the Cabinet Plan and the issue had better be decided once and for all on the universally accepted principle to the satisfaction of all concerned and the world at large.

While I had given my consent to the procedure which the Government of India had been advocating all along, my discourse with Nehru the following day left me completely perplexed. The Pandit's attitude in this respect so remarkably resembled that of Hitler on the issue of the Sudetanland. If Hyderabad could be absorbed in India by democratic means, said Nehru, well and good; but Hyderabad had to join India in any case! He was trying to avoid disowning his avowed principles of democracy but was not prepared to prejudice in the least the claim of India over Hyderabad. V. P. Menon on the other hand was less reserved in his expressions. He made it very clear that the Government of India would not like to take any risk by toying with the idea of plebiscite; if Hyderabad wanted to hold a plebiscite, he said then accession should first be concluded and the verdict of the people sought to say whether the action of the Nizam and the Government was right or wrong in doing so! I asked Menon what then was the object of India in advocating all the time that the issue of Hyderabad should be left to the people to decide? Menon had no answer to give but repeatedly stressed that all over India feelings were running high on account of the delay that was taking place in the matter of Hyderabad's accession to India and that the leaders of India found it difficult to hold the situation any longer. I said to Menon that most probably the followers of Hitler felt the same way when Great Britain did not meet the wishes of Hitler in signing a peace treaty after the fall of France. But, said Menon, "Hyderabad is not Britain and that Hyderabad would not be able to face the military might of India even for a day."

"Why then delay the matter" I inquired. "Why waste blood and stir the world opinion if it can be avoided" was the sharp reply from Menon! I agreed with him on one thing—might was after all right and the military might left behind by the Britishers in India was of no mean order.

That night I told my colleagues that I soon expected some dramatic development in the Indo-Hyderabad negotiations and asked everyone to guess what it would be this time. One and all they said that there would soon be a report of some major border incident for which Hyderabad would be made responsible. I agreed with them. We did not have to wait for long.

The following day, ninth of June, had been fixed for a meeting to consider draft heads of agreement prepared by Hyderabad. It was to take place in one of the Chambers of the Government House where Mountbatten resided. According to the schedule, the draft was to be first discussed between Menon and the delegates of Hyderabad and after the consideration of the Indian Cabinet was to be finally dealt with in a meeting of the delegates with the Governor General. Menon turned up a long time after the appointed hour. He had been probably busy discussing matters with his Prime Minister and the Governor General. He was accompanied this time by the Defence Secretary of the Government of India and his Deputy in the Ministry of States. The appearance of the Defence Secretary was somewhat unusual and looked to me a little ominous. So it was.

Menon started by saying that he was just coming from the Prime Minister Nehru and wanted certain things to be conveyed first on his behalf. He then turned to his Deputy and asked him to read out a telegram stated to have been received from the Government of Bombay that afternoon. The telegram read that the Hyderabad Police and the Razakars had invaded some place in the Bombay territory with machine guns and other weapons and had killed five policemen and two villagers of Bombay and had wounded some more. The Prime Minister of India, said Menon, had ordered that if any such incident ever happened again, the Military and the Police of the Indian Union should enter the territory of Hyderabad and catch and deal with the culprits. In this particular instance the Government of

India demanded that the culprits should be caught and proper compensation should be paid by Hyderabad. Of course, I and my colleagues were anticipating some such move after the developments of the previous few days and the allegations did not come to us altogether as a surprise. I, however, stated that I had no report of the incident and, therefore, was not in a position to offer any comments, until I was in full possession of facts. Then a still more startling statement came and this even surpassed our anticipation. Menon said that "The Government of India did not know where they stood, for the Prime Minister of India had definite and reliable information that there was a Pakistan Government's Delegation or Pakistan Government's representative in Hyderabad advising the Hyderabad Government over the relations between India and Hyderabad." On my categorical and emphatic and somewhat angry denial, the matter was not pursued further. It, however, soon became evident that the Indian representatives themselves did not seriously believe in the allegations and had used it only as one of their usual shock tactics.

Menon then presented on behalf of the Government of India four points:

One, that Hyderabad should immediately accede to India in substance in the matters of defence, foreign affairs and communications; two, responsible government in substance should be introduced in Hyderabad immediately; three, the Razakars should be immediately disbanded; four, the overall strength of the army should be fixed at twenty thousand. All these conditions, Menon said, were for an interim period only and the Government of India stood for full accession and full responsible Government at an early date. Asked about the proposed plebiscite, Menon added that the Government of India wanted forthwith accession in substance and if the Government of Hyderabad so wished, they may have the matter further confirmed by a plebiscite. Monckton, who was equally taken aback by the outburst of the Indian Government's Representatives, mildly suggested a little later that they may take up for consideration the draft heads of agreement for which the meeting had been convened. Menon retorted that his Government were not prepared to look at any draft unless they were given "here and now" accession in substance and

overriding legislative powers over Hyderabad on the three subjects already outlined.

An extremely critical situation had suddenly developed in the diplomatic relationship between India and Hyderabad and it was difficult to say what next might follow. Beyond asking a few clarifications I had hardly expressed any views as yet. I felt it would be more prudent that I should draft my reply and show it to my colleagues and then read it out to the representatives of the Government of India. I, therefore, pulled a scribbling pad and wrote out my reply and passed it on to my colleagues and to Monckton. The latter made some minor alterations and passed the paper back to me. I then read out my reply which was equally cautiously taken down by the representatives of the Indian Government. I had said that Hyderabad had expressed its agreement to the alternative suggested by the Government of India of determining the future basis of the Indo-Hyderabad relationship by plebiscite. Now the Government of India had come up with a fresh demand of accession in substance "Here and Now" and of the establishment of responsible Government in accordance with the wishes of the Government of India forthwith and of the banning of the Razakars and of limiting the overall strength of the Hyderabad forces, and had asked for acceptance or rejection of the demands forthwith. The Hyderabad delegation, I said, noted with great regret that the Government of India should have suddenly decided upon such a change in the course of action and had to convey in reply that the delegation was not empowered to take any such decision and the final reply could, therefore, only come from the Nizam. Under the circumstances, the delegation would return immediately to Hyderabad and place the full facts before the Nizam and his final decision would be communicated to Delhi.

There was little hope now left of arriving at any settlement with the Government of India—not before the departure of Mountbatten from India, at any rate, which had been fixed for the twenty-first of June. My colleagues and I, therefore, returned to Hyderabad. Moncktons decided to remain behind. On the eleventh of June in a press conference I made public the stand taken by Hyderabad. Investigations by then had also revealed that the border incident of which such

a capital had been made at Delhi, had actually occurred not in the Bombay Province but within the territory of Hyderabad. A large number of raiders from the Indian Union had marched into the territory of Hyderabad and had indulged in enormous plunder, loot and murder. At one of the points they had encountered the Hyderabad Police and the Civic Guards and opened fire on them. When the Hyderabad Police returned the fire some three constables of the Bombay Police had been killed along with four or five civilians. All this had happened deep within the Hyderabad territory and not in the Province of Bombay as was made out by the Government of India. There had been many more casualties on the Hyderabad side also of which no mention had been made. So, that was the incident that had driven the Government of India to present almost an ultimatum. Thinking back over the past events I wonder if that particular raid like many others had not been deliberately engineered for the occasion by the Central and the Provincial Governments of India.

Nehru addressed a mass gathering at Nainital on the eleventh of June and referring to Hyderabad made some curious observations. He said that an independent Hyderabad was full of dangers and if it acceded to India it would be given a place of honour and dignity. He referred to the criticism levelled against India by the foreign Press of using threat and coercion to force Hyderabad into accession and accused a section of the Indian Press on adopting a weak and vacillating policy towards the State. In such circumstances, he added, the Government of India had to take strong steps not with the purpose of defeating Hyderabad, as conflicts were always a bad thing, but to create an India of his dreams! To achieve the dream, he stated, it would not matter if a dilapidated building was pulled down! He was reported to have been loudly cheered when he said that there was a talk of independent Hyderabad, but that was absurd. He went on, "Hyderabad could be independent only if India died and not before"!

Despite such belligerent pronouncements from no less a person than the Prime Minister of India, the game over the chess board of diplomacy was not yet fully played out as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXV

END OF NEGOTIATIONS AND MOUNTBATTEN'S EXIT

In my press statements on the eleventh of June I had said that I did not know if talks would resume between India and Hyderabad. Monckton, however, after the return of the delegation continued his efforts in close collaboration with Mountbatten to arrive at some basis. Later, in a long despatch to me he forwarded some new proposals and urged that Hyderabad should reconsider the matter and that both he and Mountbatten were anxious that the Hyderabad Delegation should visit Delhi again on the fourteenth. He had emphasized that there was little time to lose as Mountbatten was anxious to see some settlement arrived at before the date of his departure which was drawing very near. The Council of Ministers in Hyderabad met on the thirteenth of June and were equally one in their anxiety to arrive at some understanding with Delhi. They accepted most of the modified terms of the Government of India which had been subsequently conveyed by Monckton but laid down certain minimum safeguards that they considered essential for the very existence of the State. In principle it was agreed that Hyderabad would pass parallel legislation to India in matters of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. It was further undertaken that any military characteristic of the Razakar organization would be removed and the organization itself would be progressively wound up. The limitation set by the Government of India on the overall armed strength of the Hyderabad forces at twenty thousand was accepted but in view of the past experience, it was understood that in the event of the Government of India failing to supply arms and ammunition needed by the Hyderabad forces, Hyderabad would be at liberty to purchase its requirements from any source abroad and India would undertake their safe transit to Hyderabad through the Indian territory. It was also most emphatically insisted that on no account Hyderabad would accept paramountcy, either in theory or in practice, of the Indian Union, whether direct or indirect. Similarly it was insisted that as by entering into the proposed agreement

Hyderabad was surrendering to a great extent its sovereign rights to India in matters of defence and external affairs, every care should be taken to preserve full economic independence of the State. It was greatly apprehended that situated as Hyderabad was geographically, and now by virtue of the limitations set on her defence and external affairs through the proposed terms, it would be impossible for the State to survive unless fullest liberty in regard to finance, trade and other economic activities was secured and guaranteed. To satisfy the Government of India it was even conceded that the draft of the "Firman" (proclamation) of the Nizam in regard to early establishment of responsible Government in the State would be shown to the Government of India in advance. The Draft had already been informally discussed with the representatives of the Indian Government which provided that in 1949 an elected constitution making body would be set up for drafting a democratic constitution for the State "*keeping in view the traditions of Hyderabad and on a basis that I (the Nizam) shall determine later*". The portion in italics had been agreed to by Mountbatten and other leaders of the Indian Government after long discussions and its full implications particularly in regard to ratio of seats between the Muslim and the non-Muslim population of the State had been fully visualized by both sides. Lastly, the Council of Ministers had expressly laid down that like all other agreements of this nature, and as also in the case of the Stand-still Agreement, there should be a clear and definite clause by which any differences of opinion in the interpretation or working of the new agreement not resolved mutually should be referred to an arbitration and the award of the arbitrator should be binding on both the contracting parties.

The Nizam made a careful study of the proposals of the Council of Ministers and appeared somewhat surprised about the extent to which they had gone in their anxiety to reach an early settlement with India. He endorsed the proposals and the delegation proceeded to Delhi on the fourteenth as urged by Mountbatten and Monckton. We had a very cordial reception from Mountbatten. He told us how anxious he was to see that the issues were settled before his departure and that he hoped that as a gesture of goodwill he would be able to fly over to Hyderabad even if it meant only a few hours' stay there. He

said that in order to secure the consent of the Deputy Prime Minister, Patel, he had himself gone over to Dehra Dun, where Patel had been still convalescing and his consent had been secured almost as a matter of personal grace to himself.

It was arranged that there should first be a preliminary meeting between Menon and the delegates of Hyderabad, and the final meeting should be with the Governor General later. Menon put forward a revised draft and much to my surprise I found that it embodied substantial modifications of the previous drafts—even of those clauses that had already been discussed and agreed to. A fundamental difference was found in the conditions governing the armed forces of the State. Menon's new draft brought the Hyderabad forces under the "State Forces Scheme of 1939" which had been introduced by the British as Paramount Power and which gave all the paramountcy prerogatives to the British Crown Representative. Menon insisted that the "1939 Scheme" should be fully operative only by substituting "Government of India" in place of "British Crown Representative" wherever it occurred. I could not possibly agree to this as this gave Paramountcy to India over Hyderabad right from the start, both in theory and practice. Hard pressed, I eventually offered as an alternative to incorporate some of the pertinent clauses of the Scheme in the proposed agreement without any reference to the "State Forces Scheme of 1939"; but the Government of India were emphatic that the "State Forces Scheme" should be fully embodied incorporating and including all the "Paramountcy" clauses. Then came another ticklish question regarding the right of India to place their troops anywhere within the State of Hyderabad during any emergency. Hyderabad had already consented to allow the stationing of the Indian Troops in the State if at any time India was engaged in any external war. India now insisted that they should have the right to post their troops in any state of emergency that may be declared by the Government of India for any reason. I had received advance information through some of my good friends that India was only waiting for Hyderabad to sign the agreement to declare a state of emergency anywhere around Hyderabad and then post their troops within the State and to let them remain there as the British troops did. They hoped that in this manner India

would establish military dominance over Hyderabad in a more peaceful and to some extent legal manner.

In regard to the other vital issue, the freedom of trade and freedom in fiscal and economic affairs, the Government of India were definitely not prepared to make any provision in the agreement; the most they would concede was a mention in a collateral letter from the Prime Minister of India that these matters required further consideration and would receive sympathetic consideration of the Government of India in future. Even in such a letter the Government of India were not prepared to accept, in principle, Hyderabad's right to freedom of trade and of economic activities. Quaintest of all was the stand taken by the Government of India in regard to the usual provisions at the end, relating to "arbitration". The spokesman of the Government of India felt that the agreement was so clear cut that there was no room for any difference of opinion arising at any time in future and that the clause regarding arbitration was not only unnecessary, but conveyed that the Government of India would regard the insistence of the delegates of Hyderabad, on its inclusion as want of *bonafide* on the part of Hyderabad to implement the terms of the agreement!

The meeting dragged on without any useful result. The delegates for the Government of India were insistent that their draft without any modification should be signed forthwith or else the Government of India would withdraw from the negotiations. The atmosphere throughout Delhi was heavily surcharged and tense. Everyone was expectant and nervous. The press representatives were all over the place and one could hardly escape from their keen and watchful eyes. Every smile or frown on the faces of the negotiating parties was keenly observed and carefully interpreted.

The following morning Mountbatten accompanied by Nehru and Menon left for Dehra Dun to further discuss the matters with Patel. We were all somewhat surprised that nothing dramatic had yet happened on this occasion to supercharge the war of nerves which had been a regular feature of all our visits to Delhi, but it soon happened. The day after Mountbatten returned from Dehra Dun, we all went to meet him. We found him not only cold but almost discourteous. At the very outset, he drew my attention to a report he had received from

Nehru of some telephone conversation between myself and Moin Nawaz Jung at Hyderabad on the previous night. The report stated that I had said things not very desirable about the negotiations proceeding. Mountbatten did not have all the details but said the conversation had been monitored by the special men appointed by the Government of India and reported to Nehru. The allegation amused me beyond words. I lightly laughed at it and told Mountbatten it was too amateurish an effort to upset me. I told him that we all knew well that all our talks were not only overheard but fully recorded. In fact, it was done in such a clumsy manner and with so much cross conversation between the men on the job that on many occasions the conversing parties had to ask them to be quiet and just listen in if they wished to. In these circumstances no one could be so foolish as to talk anything confidential on the Government of India telephones, unless it was expressly for the purpose of making it known to the Government of India! Of course, as on a previous occasion, Mountbatten had himself not believed the story and promised to tell Nehru not to feel so perturbed by the report which was obviously false. I did not even care to take any serious exception to the mean trick! We had got used to many such low level dealings at Delhi.

Once again we were all in the midst of negotiations with Mountbatten presiding.

During the course of the meetings it was repeatedly insisted by India's spokesman that the agreement would have to be signed that very day and that the situation was so explosive that it was not possible to hold it over even a day longer. On complete deletion from the draft agreement of economic safeguards considered so vital and demanded by Hyderabad, Mountbatten said that he had brought the draft already approved by Patel and that it was physically impossible now, apart from other considerations, to have any alteration or addition made to it. Same was his answer to objections over other important matters raised by Hyderabad. Eventually when I found the door completely shut, I expressed my inability to subscribe to such a document. Thereupon Mountbatten became excited. The discussions had drawn on to well after nine o'clock in the night and apparently he was feeling worried over some dinner date he had that evening. He

banged the table with his fist and said "I tell you, Hyderabad was finished, finished, finished". He then stared for a few seconds into the empty space, sprang into his chair and made a bee line dash to the exit door. With a bang of the door he was gone. That was how the meeting for the day ended, causing a good deal of embarrassment even to the other representatives of the Government of India. Walter Monckton was almost white with rage and indignation at such an objectionable behaviour of a distinguished countryman of his.

It was just past midnight when a car drove into the Nizam's Palace where the Hyderabad delegation was staying. Owing to the heat of the summer we were all sitting out on the lawns after dinner. Monckton had stayed over and was reviewing the events of the day with me. We recognized that it was a Government House car and soon alighted from it Colonel Crum, the Conference Secretary of the Governor General. In the course of a long conversation he said that both Mountbatten and he felt that it would be a great pity if the conversations broke down at that stage, when they appeared so near conclusion. I said I felt the same too but that did not mean that I should agree to sacrifice everything that Hyderabad stood for and for which we had striven all along. Crum apologized on behalf of the Governor General for the unpleasant incident of the evening and said that before definitely turning down the draft I should at least consult the Nizam even if that be on telephone. I agreed to do so early the following morning.

I rang up Moin Nawaz Jung next morning and conveyed to him the gist of the situation at Delhi. We could hear the sound of recording of our conversation but that did not really matter. My message was conveyed to the Nizam and soon came the reply. The Nizam said that he would not like to say anything unless he had a full account of the situation from me personally and discussed all the details. When Crum came again in the morning I told him what the Nizam had said and also that I was soon leaving for Hyderabad to place the entire situation before him.

On receiving the news of my intended departure Mountbatten sent word that he would like to have one more meeting with me before my departure. I did not feel like it after the previous night's

experience but finally agreed and we soon got together. Mountbatten and Menon sat facing us across the table. Crum had in the meantime a whole set of paper ready, relating to the various discussions that had gone on in rapid succession and handed over a copy to each one present. The meeting was brief but bore a more dignified atmosphere. The only point insisted by Mountbatten was that if the Nizam approved of the draft, the agreement should be signed the same day and on no account could it wait to see the light of another day. That, of course, in the normal course was a physical impossibility as the flight alone to Hyderabad from Delhi took almost half a day. I finally accepted the suggestion that I should leave one of my colleagues behind and in case the Nizam agreed I should advise him over the phone to sign and conclude the agreement. Raoof thought it was more important for him to be in Hyderabad, and I decided to leave Pingle Venkat Rama Reddy, the Deputy Prime Minister behind.

On my way back I glanced through the various papers that had been handed over to me before my departure by the Conference Secretary of the Governor General. I was shocked to find among them a revised version of the proposed "Firman" (proclamation) to be issued by the Nizam, in relation to the reforms in the internal administration of the State. Previously the Government of India had agreed to the proposal that a Constituent Assembly would be established in Hyderabad early in 1949 but the Nizam would explicitly proclaim in this Firman "keeping in view the traditions of Hyderabad and in a manner which I shall determine later". I had previously insisted in the course of discussions with the Government of India that the draft firman instead of keeping the matter in any way ambiguous should make it very clear that the Assembly would be set up on the basis of "parity" between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Government of India's representatives, at the insistence of Nehru, however, had pleaded that it would leave the Indian leaders in a very embarrassed position if they were to openly admit themselves to be a party to an arrangement in which a majority community was to have the same rights as a minority community. They had therefore suggested that since it was after all a matter between the Ruler and the people of the State all that need be said was that in a manner to be determined by the Nizam later. On

my further insistence it was also agreed by Indian spokesman finally to incorporate the phrases "in keeping with the traditions of Hyderabad". How this important phrase, introduced after a good deal of discussions and clear consent, came to be deleted in the final drafts made over to me, I could not account. This incident led to a small storm which I shall describe later.

The Nizam was greatly disappointed at the trend of the events in Delhi. I found him even prepared to accept the vague assurance to be given by the Prime Minister of India in regard to economic safeguards needed by Hyderabad for which I had fought so much but on no account was he prepared for an agreement which did not provide for reference to an independent arbitration in the event of any dispute or disagreement between the two contracting parties. He was equally not prepared to accept the demand of the Government of India to the posting of their troops anywhere in Hyderabad on the strength of declaration of a "state of emergency" by the Government of India. While he was agreeable to concede that right to the Government of India in the event of an external war, on no account was he prepared to let the Indian troops enter any part of the State at the sweet will of India. Finally he argued that the deletion of the important reservations and qualifications in the final drafts of Firman handed over by the Government of India would amount to his deliberately misleading his subjects and he would on no account be prepared to make a statement which might give an impression contrary to what he had in view and meant to do.

In a long telegram to Mountbatten on the sixteenth of June, the Nizam explained his viewpoint to the Governor General and expressed his inability to subscribe to the document unless the deleted words in draft Firman were re-incorporated and provisions were made for safeguarding the economic interests of Hyderabad and arbitration in the event of any difference arising between the two contracting parties. The issue of deletion of the vital phrases in the draft Firman raised a big storm in Delhi when the Nizam's telegram reached there. It turned out that the phrases had already been deleted in the copies furnished to Monckton a day earlier. I was charged with bad faith of having known of the deletion earlier and

trying to make out that it had only been made in the final copies furnished at the time of my departure to Hyderabad. Monckton himself immediately flew from Delhi and arrived in Hyderabad in the early hours of the following morning. Pingle Venkat Rama Reddy was called at the other end by Mountbatten to testify that the deletion had been made in the copies furnished a day earlier. Reddy made it clear that it may have been that in the copies made over to Monckton the important phrases were deleted but neither he nor any other member of the delegation from Hyderabad had any knowledge of the omission until after the final copies were handed over by Crum just prior to my leaving Delhi. It was obvious that had any of us any notion about any change in the draft Firman no one could have passed it over as other issues of lesser importance were being discussed at length and threadbare. The affair placed Monckton in a very difficult position. Both sides felt that it was his duty to point out the deletion if it had come to his knowledge. Monckton became extremely sensitive over the issue and on his arrival in Hyderabad it took a great deal of effort on my part to calm him down.

On the request of Monckton the Nizam sent another telegram to Mountbatten on the seventeenth expressing his regret at not having known that in an earlier copy furnished to Monckton the words from the draft Firman had been deleted but the matter had not been brought to the notice of any of the delegates. He thanked Mountbatten for all the interest he had taken and the efforts he had made in resolving the Indo-Hyderabad deadlock. He said he still hoped that having come near to some solution it would be possible for Mountbatten yet to get the Indian leaders to agree to some vital safeguards needed by Hyderabad and have the agreement concluded before his departure. Of course, the matter was well out of Mountbatten's hands—the leaders of Delhi were in no mood to take any heed of what Mountbatten said or did. The only reply the Nizam got to his telegrams was that in view of his immediate demission of the office as Governor General he was making over the telegrams to the Government of India for further action.

The Delhi parleys under the shadow of Mountbatten were over with the exchange of these telegrams. There was a tense and expec-

tant feeling all over; people were eager to know what had been going on during the past few days. In a press conference on the seventeenth of June, therefore, I outlined all that had happened; I said that India wanted Hyderabad to concede all its demands because of its superior position and even the Nizam's consent to India's proposal to have the issue of accession decided by a plebiscite was not acceptable to India. India always refused even to consider any proposal from Hyderabad and always maintained that Hyderabad should submit to everything that Delhi said. Yet, I maintained that Hyderabad would not deviate from the path of peaceful negotiations and was anxious as ever to seek the friendship of India and ready any time for an honourable agreement.

On the following day Nehru addressed a press conference and laid on the table the drafts on which no agreement could be reached. "The proposals embodied in the draft agreement" said Nehru "will stand and the Nizam can sign on the dotted line as and when he likes". In the meantime, he added, the Government of India would continue their policy of economic blockade and the tightening of the borders. He explained at length the implications of the draft agreement and said that one difficulty was that there was no finality about the attitude o the Hyderabad delegation, despite their being connected with Hyderabad by phone. He, of course, made no mention of the constant changes made in the proposals by the Government of India each time when an agreement was in sight. He then proceeded to say that there were really only two alternatives before Hyderabad: accept paramountcy of India over Hyderabad, in which case Hyderabad would give all that accession calls for and receive nothing in return, and the other one was direct accession. He said that the term 'paramountcy' had a bad odour about it and smelled something of the British. The only alternative left therefore, he added, was accession. He condemned the Razakar activities and the unreserved speeches of the Razakar leaders. He described the Government of Hyderabad as one controlled by the Razakars and said that India would have been justified in making an armed invasion of Hyderabad but had not yet done so as it hoped to achieve its objective by negotiations. He added, however, that the Government of India were ready to make use of their armed forces any moment but they were delaying as they had still before them

some of the principles of their departed leader Mahatma Gandhi.

Despite all the camouflaging, Nehru in a few words had said that Hyderabad will have to "sign on the dotted lines". It was precisely that aggressive attitude that Hyderabad was not prepared to submit to.

That night I told the Nizam that we would have to prepare ourselves to get annihilated by the superior arms left behind by the British with the Indian Union. I made it plain to him that the fight was totally unequal from any military point of view. It was only a case of right facing might and the only force that Hyderabad had on its side was moral force. I said that the one honourable course left for us was to go down defending our rights against overwhelming odds. I also told the Nizam that if he felt that discretion was the better part of valour, it was for him now to take the decision. I said I was ready to lay down my office with my colleagues immediately and leave him completely free to make his choice of the course he might wish to follow. But the Nizam was firmly resolved to submit to no injustice and disgrace. "Come what may" he said, and we then parted well past midnight after a somewhat emotional hand-shake—a very unusual feature of our very frequent meetings.

CHAPTER XXVI

SOLIDARITY WITHIN ALARMS DELHI

It was a matter of great speculation as to what would be the next move of India. The blockade, of course, was tightening in every respect and the sealing of the border was being perfected in every possible manner. Would India next send her armed forces to Hyderabad in defiance of the world opinion and get branded as an aggressor?

Rajagopalachari was now installed in the seat vacated by Mountbatten as Governor General of India. Would he or could he come forward to narrow down the differences between India and Hyderabad? Chari came from Madras. There had existed a traditional affinity between Hyderabad and the Province of Madras. The people of Madras were always regarded to be less communal minded and had a regard for the culture and traditions of Hyderabad. Rajagopalachari himself was in favour of peace and practised more than preached the Gandhian principles. He had breadth of vision and possessed far more administrative capacity than any other leader of India. During the days of Provincial autonomy, Madras was the best administered of all the six Congress-ruled provinces. Would Nehru and Patel give him a chance?

The Nizam sent a very cordial telegram of felicitation to Rajagopalachari on his taking over the office of Governor General and expressed earnest hope that with his advent, a new chapter would open in the Indo-Hyderabad relations and that the deadlock would be resolved through his personal efforts. The Rajaji's telegram in reply was equally cordial and warm and full of hope and brought a ray of light into the otherwise dark political atmosphere. Soon after assuming office, he invited the Agent General of Hyderabad at Delhi and gave him the assurance that he would do all that he possibly could to resolve the Indo-Hyderabad deadlock. Later, he sent for the concerned files from the Secretariat of the Government of India. His move raised a storm of resentment in the ruling clique of Delhi. In stern terms the Rajaji was warned that the Hyderabad issue was primarily the concern

of Patel and to a lesser extent of Nehru and he, as Governor General, better keep off the grass.

Rajagopalachari, soon after, gave up the Hyderabad issue out of sheer disgust. He did not make any secret of his disgust either. On several occasions he publicly stated that his presence as the Governor General was of little value to India and after one such pronouncement at Nagpur, it was widely speculated that he would soon lay down his office. A compromise must have been arrived at between the Rajaji and the real lords of the Congress later and the matter was hushed up.

The issue before Hyderabad was in what form the Government of India would next advance their plans and how should Hyderabad face them.

The general feeling, which I fully shared, was that along with complete blockade, India would intensify the border raids and create a situation which India could utilize to justify its action in advancing troops across the border and then start occupying one area after another. Whether or not that was really the plan of the Government of India, it was important for Hyderabad to safeguard its own people and protect its territory. A scheme had already been put into operation by which semi-armed Civic Guards had been posted at several points along the greater part of the two thousand miles long border that separated Hyderabad from the Indian Union. The posting of these guards had its effect. The frequency of the raids was considerably reduced, but the fewer raids that followed were intense in their fire, power and strength. The civic guards who were mostly equipped with old fashioned muzzle-loader guns were no match to the well trained raiders armed with .303 rifles and automatic weapons. Quite naturally, therefore, whenever the civic guards came into conflict with the fully armed raiders, they suffered heavy casualties and the raiders carried the day. It was obvious that without proper arms it would be impossible to keep off the raiders. So, for the moment, the issue was plain: either procure some arms immediately or lose the State by stages to the raiders!

In the collateral letters that had been exchanged at the time of the Stand-still Agreement between the Governor General of India and the Nizam, the latter had reserved for himself the right to purchase arms

and ammunitions from any other source if ever the Government of India failed to meet the requirements of Hyderabad. Having failed in all attempts to secure anything at all from India, Hyderabad decided to explore other sources. The Agent General of Hyderabad at London had already advised that he could procure some arms and ammunitions, but the difficulty lay in their transport to Hyderabad over the Indian territory. Now that the Government of India, according to the policy declared by its Prime Minister, had completely sealed off the borders and millions of rupees worth of civilian goods of all description were lying at the Indian ports and were not allowed to be transported to Hyderabad, the chances of transporting any arms and ammunitions were nil. There was only one course left open to Hyderabad: try and fly the much needed arms direct into the State over the Indian territory.

There was a good deal of hesitation both on the part of the Nizam and the Government in taking a decision to fly arms and ammunition over to Hyderabad over the Indian territory. While political considerations weighed heavy, the pressure from the police and army chiefs to procure some arms and ammunitions was equally great. The growing infiltration of the well-trained armed raiders was alarming and it was obvious that unless something was done immediately, the State would soon be lost to the raiders.

The Nizam finally accorded his approval to the proposal of the Government to procure and fly arms direct over the Indian territory and sanctioned some three million pounds sterling for the purpose. The numerous initial difficulties of the air lift were patiently overcome. The biggest hurdle was the shortage of aviation spirit in Hyderabad for refuelling of the planes that brought the material for their return journey. The aircrafts had to carry fuel, therefore, for the to and fro journey which considerably reduced their carrying capacity. At first it was thought best to fly the planes over the Indian territory during the night and after landing the stuff to send them back before the break of the day. The Indian Government had apparently anticipated some such move and had their spies around all the principal airports of Hyderabad. They soon issued orders suspending all night flying of planes throughout the Indian territory. It was not known if there were

any radar instruments in India and if there were, how effective they were. One thing, however, was established by experience, that whether or not India had any radar installations, they were not able to spot the planes arriving and leaving Hyderabad. At the same time local difficulties in landing of planes in the absence of suitable night landing equipment at the airfields of Hyderabad were many. The danger of lit-up landing strips being spotted by the Indian air force planes, which freely hovered all over the Hyderabad territory at all times of day and night, was equally great. Eventually, it was decided to fly the planes in broad daylight and, as far as possible, along the regular service routes in India so as to give the minimum cause of suspicion.

One day when I was in a depressed mood over the poor progress the air lift was making, a pilot by the name of Sydney Cotton, who had worked his way up to secure an interview with me, turned up. An Australian by birth, he had probably adopted British nationality later. He said the object of his visit to Hyderabad was to procure for some British commercial interests, large quantities of ground nut seeds which were abounding all over the State as a result of the Indian blockade. I told him we would be glad to sell all the ground nuts he wanted if he or the British High Commissioner at Delhi could arrange their transit through the Indian territory. I then directed him to the concerned officials and made a note to speak to them myself. After formal thanks and a gesture to leave, he sat down again and said that he had one more proposition if I would permit him. He then came out with an offer to fly over direct to Hyderabad any of the essential articles that were in acute shortage owing to the blockade. He then mildly suggested that he could even undertake to fly arms and ammunitions as he had come to know that Hyderabad needed them urgently to deal with the border situation. His offer did not come to me as a surprise, although I was not prepared to discuss it with him. At the time, there were quite a few people hovering around with similar propositions and some of them had even been inspired by the Intelligence Department of the Government of India. One or two of them had managed to work their way up to me and I had summarily disposed them of. I meted out the same treatment to Sydney Cotton and saw no more of him. Later, he got round the Hyderabad's Agent General

in London who, evidently, after making a good deal of enquiries, selected him as one of the agencies to fly arms and ammunitions and other essentials direct to Hyderabad. Compared to others, the agency of Sydney Cotton proved to be more efficient and dependable. It was all a costly business but there was no alternative. All kinds of stuff, besides arms and ammunitions, were eventually flown in, including X-ray films needed by the hospitals, penicillin and other essential medicines and even baby's food!

The arms imported were mostly .303 rifles and Sten guns and their ammunition. The steady, though limited, supply of these weapons soon began to show its effects along the borders. In the distribution of the material as it was arriving, priority was given to the needs of the army and the police and then to the civic guards along the borders. Besides the borders, along certain rail routes, the intruders had been playing havoc. They had successfully derailed a number of trains by loosening the fish plates and by damaging the bridges. They had mercilessly shot down the unarmed maintenance gangs along the rail roads and it had been found simply impossible to offer them any protection against the armed raiders. The imported rifles and Sten guns steadily improved the situation all round. The less effective weapons, such as old-fashioned muskets and muzzle loaders, were withdrawn from the more affected zones and supplied to the lesser disturbed areas. After providing arms to the civic guards, it also became possible to progressively withdraw the regular army units which had been lying for months along hundreds of miles of border in small and ineffective numbers. The regular units were either brought back to their headquarters or concentrated in greater strength at the more strategic points.

One of the greatest difficulties experienced was in regard to fuel oils and lubricants both for transport and industrial purposes. The Government of India had for long curtailed the movement of petroleum and diesel oil into Hyderabad and had now imposed a total ban on everything what they called "petroleum and petroleum products". Not a drop of petrol or diesel oil or any type of lubricants could be brought in. Although such a move had been anticipated, it had not been possible for Hyderabad to build up any reserves primarily for

lack of storage capacity. In most cases, the storage arrangements were just good for ten to twenty days of normal consumption and with the severest of ration could hardly last for thirty days. In a country sparsely served by railroads, it looked that the entire transport system would be paralyzed in a matter of weeks and would completely upset the civic life of the country and bring the administrative machinery to a standstill.

From "Dakshna Sadan" Munshi watched the deteriorating situation with an air of satisfaction. He was certain that as a result of breakdown of transport, an acute food situation would soon develop which would be completely unmanagable for the administration. But, it was not long before he was disillusioned. He saw that the alcohol plants were anyway turning out enough synthetic gasoline to meet the essential needs. He watched that after frantic experiments with a number of indigenous vegetable oils, an admixture was prepared after certain physical and chemical processing with alcohol on which the diesel trucks were successfully running. Castor and certain other vegetable oils after due treatment were serving as satisfactory lubricants. There were no visible signs of food shortage and instead of despondency and frustration in the populace, there was an amazing determination and activity all round and in every walk of life. Despite all the inconveniences that were being experienced, he found there was not a murmur or a sign of depression in any section of the people whether Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis or the Sikhs. He observed people from every community were engaged heart and soul in finding substitutes and putting forward some of the most ingenious ideas and translating them into action to meet the situation. He saw everyone anxious to forget his or her own troubles and was out to help the other in whatever manner possible. No one thought in terms of this community or that and believed that this was the hour to save the honour and dignity of Hyderabad. In the matter of disputes and differences among themselves, they said that they would have them cleared up after they had saved Hyderabad. The spirit was not confined to the metropolis alone; it was manifest in almost every nook and corner of the country. Munshi's hopes of a worsening food situation, which for some time was causing serious anxiety to the Government,

were fast waning out. The situation had begun to steadily improve by the most astonishing co-operation, in fact enthusiasm, of the peasants, who not only came out with all their stocks but volunteered to convey them in their own crude bullock-carts to the consuming centres. It was a remarkable gesture as no amount of temptation or pressure had ever before succeeded in getting out of the farmers any part of their hoarded stocks. During the crisis, the farmers of Hyderabad, who were mostly Hindus, had risen as one man to pool the food grains and to do the transport. Nor, at any stage did they show any tendency to demand anything but fair prices both for the commodities and their transportation. Likewise, with hardly any exception every employee of the Government from top to bottom, was anxious to contribute all that he or she could. No less was the anxiety on the part of other citizens, both in the urban and the rural areas, to do their best, to meet the situation. Every man and woman appeared to feel that their hour of trial had come and one and all they seemed to be pulsating with unique enthusiasm. Most surprising of all were the offers from some of the staunch Congressites. They came forward and professed that despite their political ideologies and avowed allegiance to the All India Congress, they felt that the hour of trial had come for their motherland and they could no longer act counter to the interests of the State or remain idle spectators. They were just as eager to play their part in saving their motherland.

The enthusiasm and the public spirit of sacrifice and confidence manifest all over was completely beyond the comprehension of Munshi and those who surrounded him. To add to their amazement, at the critical juncture, the Government announced their decision to release almost all the political detainees throughout the State. Only the President of the State Congress, Ramanand Tirth, who had forced himself into the prison despite better counsel, simply with a view to regain his lost popularity with the masses, remained under arrest. On one occasion Munshi privately suggested to me that he might also be released and personally I was inclined to do so. But I was strongly advised against such a step so long as the tension with the Union of India continued as acute as it was at the moment.

Munshi soon realized that the morale of the entire population of

Hyderabad was such as would not crack for a long time under the physical strain of economic blockade and saw that the people were more and more cheerfully getting used to the hardships. Bulk of the Hindu population which Munshi and the Government of India had reckoned would rise up in favour of India, were solidly for their homeland and stood by the Government. It was mainly the result of their enthusiastic support that the administration was able to function and resist all the pressure from India. With a few thousand rifles and Sten guns the border raids had been brought under control to a very great extent and were no longer as menacing as they had been some time ago. The administrative machinery, despite a few incidents here and there, was functioning with an effectiveness and efficiency that was never before witnessed. There were a few incidents of lawlessness but they were ruthlessly dealt with. A gang of Muslim *faqirs*, under the name of Deendars, had associated themselves with certain acts of atrocity and robbery and were all rounded up. The Hindu masses, despite the incessantly violent propaganda of the Indian press and the radio and vain running about of a few State Congress volunteers, saw for themselves that things actually were very different and were not prepared to be led astray against their own better judgment. The disturbing activities of certain elements under the name of communism had been brought fully under control and were causing much less headache than for a long time past. Derailments of trains and incidents of damage to railroads and highways and other public property that had become almost a daily feature a few months earlier, were now a rare occurrence. Train and other services, though fewer in number, were running efficiently and on time. The various mines and industries, despite severe shortage of essential materials and spares owing to the blockade, had improvised many substitutes and voluntarily pooled their resources and were working almost to their normal capacity. And, life though very much tinged with austerity, flowed smoothly in all sections of society.

This turn of events inside Hyderabad was least anticipated by the Indian leaders and completely dismayed them and upset all their plans. Munshi, who had so far been smarting over his own diplomatic failure, now felt more obsessed at no immediate prospect of Hyderabad yield-

ing under the pressure of economic blockade. Any delay in strong military offensive by India to liquidate Hyderabad was just unbearable to him. He started sending long and exaggerated tales to Delhi of military preparations of Hyderabad. Almost daily he fabricated series of evidences, all leading up to show that Hyderabad was in close league with Britain, America and Pakistan, all planning to wipe off India. He stated that the armies of Hyderabad were reaching a hundred thousand mark and the auxiliaries and volunteers corps exceeded half a million. Delhi certainly discredited his exaggerated reports but the leaders there, in the hope of cowing down Hyderabad into submission by a war of nerves through constant and ruthless propaganda, went to such a limit in arousing the feelings of their own people that it became difficult for them to control. The Indian leaders were equally annoyed by the growing public opinion both in Britain and America against the high-handed behaviour of India towards Hyderabad. Things on the Kashmir front, too, were not going as well as they had hoped and there was nothing that could be done about it. The economic conditions all over India had also been steadily deteriorating ever since independence was gained. The series of reverses suffered by the Indian Government, both on the home and external fronts, were causing growing dissatisfaction in the public, and resulting in mass frustration. A quick victory over the plains of Hyderabad with the mechanized units left behind by the British, the leaders of India felt, would more than compensate all the set-backs they had suffered. They, therefore, decided to accelerate the military preparations which had been going on for many months already, to invade Hyderabad.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE IMMORTAL SEVEN OF NANAJ

After the admitted inability of the Governor General of India, Rajagopalachari, to play any effective role in resolving the Indo-Hyderabad tension and the dead wall presented both by Nehru and Patel to all diplomatic approaches, Hyderabad decided to appeal to the United Kingdom and the United States for assistance. The Nizam wrote personal letters to His Majesty King George the VI and to President Truman and to Mr. Clement Attlee, the then Prime Minister of Britain. He apprised them all fully of the aggressive behaviour and plans of India and of the impending invasion of Hyderabad by Indian armies and made a pathetic appeal to them all to step in and to save the situation. I made a similar appeal to Mr. Winston Churchill, who, at the time, was leader of the opposition in the British Parliament. The Hon. Richard Beaument offered to personally take the letter to His Majesty the King. It was intercepted at Delhi, and despite Beaument's protest, torn open by the Indian Union officials and rudely treated.

The replies received from the heads of the United States of America and United Kingdom expressed profound concern over the situation and deep sympathy for the cause of Hyderabad, but they both expressed their inability to intervene so long as Hyderabad remained bound by the terms of the Stand-still Agreement by which, they said, Hyderabad had ceded foreign relations to India for a year from November 29th, 1947. That meant there were another five months to go. Would India invade Hyderabad within this period by setting aside all the undertakings given in the Stand-still Agreement or would she wait until the 29th of November 1948, the day the Agreement was to expire? This was a vital issue before Hyderabad. The information and the reports received from various sources supported the possibility of India adopting either course. To what extent could India afford to disregard world opinion and advance its armies, and in the event of an armed aggression would the United Nations come forward and

play any effective role in time? What should Hyderabad do in the event of invasion? Offer no resistance at all and let the Indian armies march in, or put up just a token resistance or fight as long as she could and go down fighting?

These were the all-important issues before the Nizam and the Government of Hyderabad during the period. Correct assessment of the situation was vital for chalking out the future course of action. India, of course, by now had come to believe that terrorizing propaganda or total blockade or border raids alone could not force Hyderabad into submission and that a more positive action would be necessary to achieve quick results. In the Indian Cabinet itself, there were two schools of thought. The party on the side of Jawaharlal Nehru was more conscious of the world opinion and the possible international repercussions that an open aggression might lead to. The other group led by Vallabbhai Patel was anxious to resolve the problem early by force for more than one reason. It was the firm conviction of Patel that the Hindu community, on account of centuries old traditions and constant preachings of non-violence by Gandhiji had become too docile and vigourless and that a spectacular victory over Hyderabad would best serve to revive their vigour. He attached little importance to world opinion and treated the United Nations, openly, almost with contempt. The army on the other hand wanted time to prepare if quick results were to be achieved and wanted to be sure that in the event of a conflict with Hyderabad, Pakistan was going to remain neutral. They were not prepared to get involved in a multi-front war. It was important, therefore, for India to know what Pakistan was going to do.

The Nizam during this period used to hold long consultations with the army Commander. It was clear to everyone that in the event of a full-fledged invasion by India, Hyderabad would not be able to resist for long. What was important to determine was for exactly how long could Hyderabad resist? If Hyderabad could resist long enough for the world opinion to gain momentum and make itself effective against India, then resistance at all cost was fully justified; otherwise Hyderabad might as well submit right away. The army Commander, time after time, had repeatedly assured the Nizam

and the Government, that with his present resources he could organize the defences in depths, so that it would at least be three months before the Indian armies could make a final assault on the metropolis from any direction. I did not share the optimism of the army Commander, but believed that it should be possible for the armed forces of Hyderabad to hold the Indian armies from four to six weeks before they could reach the capital. This period I personally believed would be sufficient to rouse world opinion and bring the United Nations and the major powers on to the scene.

The other important issue was whether the pro-Indian elements in the State, who had very cleverly managed to secure some influential positions for themselves in the organizational set up of the Hyderabad State Congress, would be able to work up any section of the masses to make the defence arrangements difficult or at any rate to cause any serious inconvenience? Here, I was certain, that the bulk of the Hindu population would stand solidly behind the Government and even if an attempt to sabotage was made by the pro-Indian elements, the local population, regardless of communal considerations, would themselves effectively deal with them. The Nizam used to hold long consultations with the civil and military officers, almost daily, and review every detail of the political and strategic situation, but despite his anxiety, at no time did he show any sign of nervousness.

I had given very definite and emphatic instructions to Hyderabad's Agent General at Delhi to strive for an understanding with the Indian leaders even if it involved some further sacrifices of the prestige and rights of Hyderabad so long as it did not amount to abject surrender and a total loss of political and economic independence. The foreign diplomatic circles at Delhi, with the possible exception of the British High Commissioner, were in sympathy with the cause of Hyderabad and were only too anxious to help in whatever manner they could. In complete contrast to the United States mission, the role played by the British High Commission was most curious and unaccountable. The British High Commissioner and his Mission were expected at least to show complete neutrality, if not sympathy. The communications from His Majesty the King and the Prime Minister Clement Attlee had assured that Britain would do everything possible to arrive

at a reasonable understanding between India and Hyderabad. Winston Churchill was not in power but even as leader of the opposition, had openly communicated to me his fullest sympathy and support for the cause of Hyderabad. Despite all that, the attitude and activities of the staff of the British High Commission at Delhi remained not only indifferent but often too obviously unfriendly towards Hyderabad. Of course, the strongly pro-Indian policy of the Labour Government in the United Kingdom and the personal inclinations of Clement Attlee and strong feelings of the powerful figure—Stafford Cripps—in the British Cabinet in favour of India, were no secret. Still, it was least expected that Britain could so completely disregard the centuries-old strong ties and all the treaties that had so closely bound Britain and Hyderabad together. During those days, an assistant of the British High Commissioner's office was frequently running up and down between Delhi and Hyderabad. At first he was treated with courtesy and generous hospitality and every facility was extended to him being a member of Britain's High Commission. It was soon found out that he was out to take the meanest advantage of the hospitality and the courtesy offered and was inciting all the British and American residents in Hyderabad, either engaged in Government services or otherwise, to give up their jobs and to offer no co-operation to the Government or to extend any sympathy for the cause of Hyderabad!

Towards the middle of July, the Government of India cancelled the licence and prohibited all flights over the Indian territory of the Deccan Airways, the only Hyderabad airline that used to operate regular flights from Hyderabad to Bombay, Bangalore, Madras and Delhi. A little later, the Grand Trunk Express which passed through Hyderabad territory on its run from Madras to Delhi was diverted over a very circuitous route to avoid passing through Hyderabad. These measures caused a great deal of inconvenience. As a result, all direct contacts between Hyderabad and its Agent General at Delhi were cut off as the Government of India would not deliver any cipher telegrams to and from Hyderabad. Telephone conversations were equally impossible, not only because they were tapped, but they were so crudely interrupted that not a word could pass over the lines.

An unfortunate incident happened during the period. Along the

Western borders of Hyderabad there were a number of small areas belonging to the Indian Union which lay within and surrounded on all sides by the State Territory. Similarly, there were several islands of Hyderabad in the Indian Union territory. The local officials of India took good care to see that no administrative contact was possible between Hyderabad and these enclaves. Every conceivable difficulty was placed in the way of Hyderabad officials and other government servants proceeding to these areas through the Indian territory. The Indian Union officials, on the other hand, received full facility to pass through Hyderabad territory to their own enclaves. Despite the instructions from higher authorities, the natural annoyance of the Hyderabad local officials at not receiving a reciprocal treatment at the hands of the Indian officials could not at times be kept in control. The complaints, therefore, of uncivil behaviour towards the travelling public and officials and other Government servants on both sides, were frequent. Barsi was one such comparatively large enclave of India within the Hyderabad territory and the Indian Union had for some time past been concentrating their military units in that area. At the approach points to the enclave through the Hyderabad territory, there were frequent exchanges of hot words between the Hyderabad Customs officials and the Indian Union personnel. From one of the Customs points, at a village called Nanej in the Hyderabad territory, the local officials had been repeatedly reporting that the military personnel of the Indian Union were constantly exhibiting humiliating and threatening attitude to the local Customs and the police and invariably forced through the Customs barrier without undergoing the usual formalities. They had repeatedly pleaded that a military unit should take charge of the post and the civil authorities relieved of the responsibility. The Government, however, were anxious to avoid any possibility of the Hyderabad army units coming into any direct contact with the Indian Union troops and, therefore, had ordered some time ago that all Hyderabad troops should move back three miles inside the border of the State. It was an embarrassing step to take and there had been a good deal of public criticism in Hyderabad over the measure. People very rightly asked at whose mercy had been left the population of Hyderabad which lived in the three miles belt. The

only justification for withdrawing the troops was to avoid any direct clash between the armed forces of the two sides. In fact, even the police and civic guard pickets all along the border were given strict instructions to avoid any skirmish with the military units of the Indian Union but only to protect the people from the atrocities of the raiders. The police and civic guard pickets stationed at Nanej village had between them thirty fire arms in all—some six .303 rifles, another six old Henry Martinees, a couple of Sten guns and the rest were old type muzzle loaders. Each gun had probably ten rounds of ammunition or less.

The police and the civic guards of the Nanej post had been tired of the repeated insults that were hurled upon them almost daily by the Indian Union military personnel and their menacing show of armed strength. On some occasions, the Indian military personnel levelled loaded revolvers and rifles at the guards. One day, a convoy of Indian troops passed through with the usual show of fire arms, pointed all the time towards the guards. Those on guard also collected all their arms and decided to have a show down in case the scene was repeated. Very soon, another convoy of Indian troops followed and refused to fulfil the usual customs formalities. The Customs officials and the civic guards were jeered at as usual and someone from the Indian army fired a shot possibly in the air. In reply one of the pickets also fired a shot in the air. This greatly infuriated the Indian army men and very soon a regular fight was in progress between the Indian army men and the local picket of the police and civic guards. There were a few casualties on both sides. The Indian army vehicles picked up their wounded and left the spot. A little later some more Indian army vehicles appeared and this time they started firing at the post from a distance as they approached. The picket, in the meantime, had also reorganized itself. All those who had muzzle loaders and old Henry Martinees were sent away to the village and the post was held by those who had .303 rifles and Sten guns. They returned the fire from the Customs post which somewhat deterred the approaching vehicles. They turned back in the direction they had come and a few hours later two large Indian military convoys approached from both sides of the station. They started firing as they approached. The defenders

had by now entrenched themselves in various points of vantage and waited till the Indian Union convoys came well within range. They then opened fire on the vehicles and inflicted several casualties. Some of the vehicles were abandoned in haste by the Indian Army and others were withdrawn. After that, intermittent and sporadic firing from both sides went on for several hours.

The road on either side of Nanej village only led into the Indian Union territory and approach to the village from the Hyderabad territory by road was only possible through the Indian Union. The Customs and civic guards of Hyderabad did not have any wireless set or any other means of communications with their headquarters except by foot across the country. On the other hand the Indian army vehicles were fitted with wireless sets and they signalled for more reinforcements. In the meantime the ammunition stock of the civic guards was running low as they were left with only a few more rounds. Some of the daring ones among them, however, managed to crawl across to the abandoned lorries and were able to collect not only a good stock of .303 ammunition but also a few rifles. They brought all these back and again entrenched themselves. With additional reinforcements that had by now arrived, the Indian Union army units again advanced with heavy machine gun and mortar firing. Even that did not deter the defenders who were no more than seven in all but were well distributed over several points of vantage.

No amount of firing and intense shelling shook the undaunted seven. One by one everyone of the seven laid down his life but only after firing so long as his ammunition lasted or his wounds permitted. The casualties on the side of the Indian army were appreciable. Unconfirmed reports had put the number of dead and severely wounded at eighty. There were several casualties among the civilians of the village too, most of whom had left their houses and fled into the far away fields when the firing started. The damage to the property in the village due to heavy mortar shelling was considerable and eventually very few houses in the village were left intact. In the meantime, more Indian troops arrived and by night fall had fully occupied the village. After occupation, they systematically burnt down every Muslim house and butchered every Muslim man, woman and child

who had the misfortune to return to the village later along with their Hindu neighbours. A number of the Hindu residents of the village had also met the same fate. Property of everybody was looted and finally a strong army unit of India was left behind in charge of the village.

As a result of the incident, excitement naturally ran high on both sides. A strong protest was lodged by Hyderabad but the Indian Union refused to leave the occupation of Nanej village. The loss of Nanej was a great blow to the prestige of Hyderabad. Re-occupation of Nanej by force would have meant a full-fledged military operation in which the Indian troops had all the advantages of road communications from either side, while there was only cross country approach from Hyderabad. The Nizam himself was very much upset about the whole affair and the agitation all round for the re-occupation of Nanej at any price was great. I was determined, however, to resist every pressure and resort only to protests through diplomatic channels even though I knew that they would be of no avail.

The Nanej incident apparently left two impressions on the leaders of the Indian Union. Firstly, apart from the armed forces of Hyderabad, they now believed that the civic guards, even though ill-trained and poorly equipped were in no way lacking in courage and were a factor not to be completely ignored. Secondly, they concluded that the Hyderabad Government was avoiding at all cost any direct clash between their own armed forces and regular Indian army units. The Indian Union would therefore be safe, if they wished to occupy any points in the Hyderabad territory, provided they do so with full military force. These impressions of the Government of India were manifest from the subsequent activities of its armed forces.

In the districts of Aurangabad, Nalgonda and Warangal similar incidents took place where the attacking forces in full strength, with armoured cars and some times light tanks, carried the day but invariably, unlike Nanej, after causing a good deal of damage to life and property, they withdrew. In almost every case the defending police force or civic guards were completely wiped out. No amount of protests lodged with the Government of India brought forth any response.

There was very little diplomatic activity during the period. Besides, the political atmosphere being unfavourable, the physical difficulties owing to the suspension of air services and other means of communications were a serious factor. The Agent General of Hyderabad at Karachi had been able to set up a private receiving and transmitting station at his end and that was about the only means of communication left for Hyderabad with the outside world. Quite often messages to the Agent General at Delhi were transmitted through the Agent General at Karachi in a complicated cipher on the Morse code on different wave lengths and at different times of the day. The Indian Union despite their best efforts were not able to jam the transmissions, and as far as is known never succeeded in deciphering any of the messages, even when they picked them up.

It was some time early in August that I received a telephone call from an old friend, Ramaswamy Mudaliar, who had accepted the post of the Diwan of Mysore after the Congress Government had come into power at Delhi. At the time, Rajagopalachari had been touring southern India and happened to be at Mysore. Ramaswamy Mudaliar told me that the Governor General was sending an important communication to the Nizam and that an officer of the Mysore Government would be carrying it and that he would like the officer to be escorted after the train entered the Hyderabad State. There was no need for anything of the kind as travelling in Hyderabad territory was as safe as anywhere else. However, on his insistence that it was the special request of the Governor General, I agreed. He then expressed his great personal sympathy for me over the anxious time that I must be having and hoped everything would turn out for the best. He was sorry that he could not be more communicative, although there were lots of things he wished to say. I knew Ramaswamy Mudaliar had felt always sympathetic for the cause of Hyderabad and on more than one occasion I had myself suggested that his capable services should be secured for Hyderabad. There was not much love lost between him and the leaders of the Indian Congress. His son, who edited a popular paper in Madras, was no mild critic of the policy of the All India Congress and the doings of its leaders. At times, he had even been very outspoken about the high-handedness of the

Indian leaders in dealing with Hyderabad. It, therefore, came as a great surprise to me later that he, of all people, should have agreed to advocate the cause of India before the United Nations Security Council when ultimately the Indo-Hyderabad dispute went before that body. His choice from the point of view of India could only be understood in one way. Ramaswamy's personal contacts with the representatives of other nations of the world were excellent. He was one of the original signatories of the United Nations Charter. India had made a blunder before, by making a wrong choice for the presentation of their case over the Kashmir issue and her chief representative Gopalswamy Iyengar had made a laughing stock of himself and of India before the world. Nor could India risk the issue of Hyderabad in the uncertain feminine hands of Vijya Laxmi Pandit, despite her personal charms and her being the sister of Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. But, the acceptance of Ramaswamy of the role, in a cause that he believed to be immoral, was a surprise. Perhaps he thought it was the opportunity for him to get into the good books of the Congress over-lords—may be it was with a view to make safe the position of his own son in the new set-up of India.

I informed the Nizam of the telephone message that I had received from Ramaswamy Mudaliar. There was a good deal of speculation as to what could be the contents of such an important communication from the Governor General of India. At last the messenger arrived. He insisted on personally handing over the sealed envelope to the Nizam, but when he was finally told that he might as well go back as the Nizam did not personally receive letters himself, he delivered it in the private office of the Nizam.

The contents of the envelope turned out to be a letter from His Majesty King George VI with a small forwarding note from the Governor General. It was in reply to the Nizam's communication which had been torn open on its way at Delhi by the Indian Union Customs officials. His Majesty's letter was full of pious hopes that better understanding would soon prevail between his Dominion of India and the centuries old Faithful Ally of the British Empire, but there was little in it of any practical value to deal with the explosive situation.

It was by now finally decided that the issue of Hyderabad should be referred to the United Nations Security Council. Monckton had already been advised to make a careful study of the provisions of the charter of the United Nations and advise whether the application of Hyderabad could be entertained by the Security Council and, if so, whether it would have to be presented direct or through some sponsoring member. While there were many countries that had their fullest sympathy for Hyderabad and were convinced of the righteousness of its cause and were prepared to sponsor its application, it was considered desirable, if possible, to make the approach direct. The provisions of the charter, it was found, did provide that a non-member could refer its case to the Security Council and that the Council was empowered under Section 35(2) to deal with such cases.

It was important to make a right selection of the Hyderabad team that would present the case to the Security Council. Many were of the opinion that I should proceed myself immediately to Lake Success or to Paris where the Council was going to meet shortly. It was, however, obvious that at that critical moment when catastrophe was lurking, it would be most unwise for me to leave Hyderabad. With the concurrence of the Cabinet, the Nizam and I finally decided that Moin Nawaz Jung, who held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in the Government in addition to Finance, should lead the delegation. He had been responsible for the final negotiations of the Stand-still Agreement with the Indian Union and knew the entire constitutional position and the political situation of Hyderabad better than anyone else. I was still anxious to associate someone with the delegation who had previous experience of the United Nations. I sounded Ali Yawar Jung who had at one time attended the sessions of the U.N. He readily agreed, but was not prepared on personal grounds to serve under the leadership of Moin Nawaz Jung. He was particularly emphatic that I should lead the delegation. That being not possible, he decided to remain behind but devotedly applied himself to prepare the case for presentation to the U.N. He prepared excellent documents which were handed over to Moin Nawaz Jung, when he finally left for Paris.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SOME INTERNAL STRESSES

For a while it looked as a lull before the storm. Apart from the occasional and contradictory outbursts of Nehru in his public speeches, and the non-stop propaganda and war of nerves carried out by the All India Radio and the regimented Indian press, there was very little move on diplomatic level either from the side of India or Hyderabad. In the meantime there were certain stresses within, which are worth recording.

Some of the reports from Zain Yar Jung, the Agent General of Hyderabad at Delhi, had been very confusing of late. With the difficulties of communication, any clarification was not easy and both the Nizam and I had felt very vexed on certain occasions. To call him frequently to Hyderabad was an equally difficult task. His efforts in mobilising the opinion of the foreign missions at Delhi in favour of Hyderabad had been commendable but that weighed little with the Nizam. With the Ministry of States and with other leaders of the Government of India he had a very difficult role, but even so he was found falling far short of expectations and very inconsistent of late. From his reporting of the situation at Delhi, it was difficult to discern whether it was factual or just depicted his own mood for the moment.

During one of his visits in July the Nizam as usual had a long interview with him. Zain Yar Jang then met me and gave me a full appraisal of the situation at Delhi. He told me that although the States Ministry appeared anxious to start a military campaign he had definite information that the Defence Services of India were too far committed already and wanted at least three to four months more to deploy enough forces to make a quick job of Hyderabad. He told me that I could safely plan my political and strategic moves on the basis of no military campaign on the part of India earlier than the end of November. There was some logic in his assessment of the situation as the Stand-still Agreement was to expire towards the end of November. It was possible, therefore, that India might not

choose to be branded as violator of a solemn agreement in the eyes of the world. The following morning when I met the Nizam and we compared notes of our impressions over the reports of Zain Yar Jung we were a bit ill at ease that there was such great variance in the accounts given by him to the Nizam and to myself. He had reported to the Nizam that the Indian troops were ready for advance over Hyderabad and that an attack might be expected any moment. There were several other instances of a similar nature. The Nizam insisted that I should immediately post someone else at Delhi. The choice of a suitable person presented some difficulty and eventually it was decided to send Ahmed Mohiuddin Razvi, a senior civil service officer, to relieve Zain Yar Jung. There was some hesitation on account of Ahmed having the same surname as Qasim Razvi even though there was not the remotest connection between the two. The very name of Qasim Razvi was a great provocation to Delhi and it was feared that Ahmed in his difficult mission might be handicapped owing to his surname. It was, however, hoped that before long the Delhi circles would be able to differentiate between the two. Zain Yar Jung in the meantime begged leave to stay in Delhi for some time for family reasons. His wife had fractured her leg and could not be shifted for a few weeks and he was allowed to stay behind till she was in a condition to be moved.

There were rumours afloat that the Nizam was in touch with Mirza Ismail and had sought his assistance in resolving the Indo-Hyderabad deadlock. Mirza's journey to Delhi had been reported in the press and on his arrival in the capital of India, his statements indicated that he had some mission to perform relating to Hyderabad. Mirza was intensely disliked by the Muslims on the whole and was greatly distrusted and despised by the Ittehadis in particular. The Hindus also had little respect for him as a result of his previous record of service in Hyderabad and his reappearance on the scene caused quite some commotion all over. Qasim Razvi came to me and asked if I would enlighten him on the purpose of Mirza's visit to Delhi. There was little that I knew beyond what had appeared in the press and there was not very much that I could reveal. The Nizam had said not a word to me and I had little reason to ask him anything

specific on the basis of rumours alone.

Soon after the rumours about Mirza had got afloat I came to know that the Nizam was having long consultations with certain groups, whose views were distinctly known to be against the policy that was being pursued by the Government. Personally, I did not mind whom the Nizam met and what he talked as long as I knew that there was complete unanimity between the Government and the Nizam over the policy that was being pursued by the Government. So, one morning in the course of our daily talks I brought to the notice of the Nizam the persistent rumours going round and drew his particular attention to the statements made by Mirza Ismail on his arrival at Delhi. I found him not very communicative over the points raised by me and when I suggested that his repeated meetings with the sections, known to hold views against the policy of the Government, were giving rise to all kinds of speculations, he said that he did not propose to discuss his prerogative of meeting whom he liked. It was my first experience with the Nizam speaking in such a strain. There had never been an occasion where there was not complete accord between him and the Government headed by me in all matters of policy besides, of course, perfect cordiality. Every major issue used to be discussed threadbare without the least mental reservation and, particularly, in the realm of Indo-Hyderabad relations, there was never a move over which there had not been complete accord. That being the case, apart from feeling hurt by his remark, I was very perturbed as I was sure that nothing could be more damaging to the cause of Hyderabad than the Nizam and the Government working at cross purposes in any manner at such a crucial moment.

On my return to my office, I drew up a note stating that at the time of accepting the office I had made it an express condition that I should not be called upon to serve for more than six months. Now, it was nearly a year that I was carrying on mainly because the country was passing through such an unprecedented crisis and the Nizam and the public had exhibited all along such implicit faith in me. I said I had now reason to fear that I do not enjoy the same position at least *vis-a-vis* the Nizam and believed that at such a crucial moment there could be nothing more damaging to the cause of the State than the slightest

difference in the approach of the Nizam and that of the Government. The Nizam, I said, would be perfectly justified in pursuing any other course of action for the eventual safety of the State and as such, I said, I submitted my resignation with immediate effect so as to let him have a free hand in whatever line of action he chose.

I had not consulted any of my colleagues in the Cabinet before sending the resignation. In the grave crisis the safety of the State was of greater importance than the usual formalities or the rules of procedure. Within half an hour of my resignation reaching the hands of the Nizam, I was urgently summoned to his palace and we were face to face again. The Nizam mildly rebuked me in a friendly way and said that if there was any lack of confidence, he would unhesitatingly say so to my face. He repeated that it was his prerogative to consult whom he liked and he did so as he wanted to make sure if the other side had anything constructive and concrete to suggest beyond offering mere criticism. He said that after free and frank discussions with all shades of opinion, he now felt satisfied that there was no course of action open other than the one that was now being pursued. He reminded me that I had agreed to accept the office on his insistence as the country needed my services in a very grave hour and that the crisis had not yet passed; in fact it may be yet to come. He thought if I pressed my resignation, it would only further complicate matters both internally and externally. He then pulled out a paper from his pocket and gave it to me to read. It was a letter from Mirza Ismail in which he had expressed his grave concern over the deteriorating situation of the Indo-Hyderabad relations and had said that he was on very good terms with the leaders of the Indian Government and if the Nizam permitted, he would go to Delhi and try to bring about an honourable understanding between India and Hyderabad. I was then given another paper and that was the copy of the Nizam's reply to Mirza. The Nizam had thanked Mirza for his concern over Hyderabad affairs and welcomed any contribution that Mirza might be able to make to improve the relations with India. In a subsequent letter Mirza had reported that in Delhi he had found the situation far more serious than he had anticipated and that something had to be done quickly. He asked that I should

be sent to Delhi at once to negotiate and sign an agreement forthwith. The Nizam in his reply had said that he would be glad to send me to Delhi if only there were any basis of arriving at an understanding and at least incorporating one or two safeguards in the previous draft.

The Nizam asked me if I thought there was anything wrong about the correspondence. There was nothing wrong that I could see and thought that it could even be released for the information of the public. The Nizam did not approve of the idea, but said that if I thought it necessary, an unofficial handout could be released from the External Affairs Department to the effect that Mirza Ismail's visit to Delhi was in his personal capacity and that he had no official mandate from the Nizam or from his Government to conduct any negotiations or to arrive at any settlement.

This internal episode thus ended as quickly as it had percipitated. Early in August, Zain Yar Jung arrived with two communications from Mirza—one addressed to the Nizam and the other to me. The Government of India had given special permission for his flight to Hyderabad. He met me after he had seen the Nizam and handed over Mirza's letter. Mirza, in his letter, was very emphatic that I should immediately proceed to Delhi to sign the previous draft presented by India with such modifications as the Government of India may now ask for. He said that if that was not possible, I should, in any case, visit Delhi to discuss the matters with him and some of the leaders of the Indian Government. He said that the consequences may be grave if I failed to turn up. I asked Zain Yar Jung what his own reading of the situation in Delhi was. He was less informative than usual but at least in the matter of military campaign by India, he was certain it would not take place before the end of November. He said that whatever the Ministry of States may wish, or Munshi from Hyderabad may insist, the armed forces of India were not treating the matter lightly and at least needed that much time for preparations. I asked him what were the chances of any progress in the Indo-Hyderabad relations, if I were to visit Delhi. He did not know and would not like to hazard a guess.

Later on, when I met the Nizam, I showed him the communica-

tion that I had received from Mirza Ismail. He had more or less known the content of the letter before he read it. He then pulled out from his pocket the letter he had received from Mirza and made it over to me to read. It appeared Mirza's contacts, after some initial talks with Rajagopalachari, who was an old friend of his, were limited only to V.P. Menon and he had neither met Patel nor Nehru—the principal figures that mattered. As a result of his talks with Menon, Mirza had come to the conclusion that the Government of India were now prepared for nothing short of full accession and complete responsible Government. Mirza said that he was making every effort to persuade Delhi not to go back on the Draft Agreement presented on behalf of India in June last, prior to Mountbatten's departure, which Hyderabad had not agreed to sign. He thought that the Government of India might yet be agreeable to sign the agreement, provided I was sent to Delhi by the Nizam immediately with authority to accept whatever further conditions that might be prescribed by India and finally sign and conclude the agreement. Mirza then expressed his great concern over the personal safety of the Nizam and thought that the only way he could secure his position and enable him to enforce his authority was to invite the Government of India to send their troops and post them in Secunderabad and Bolarum, as in the days of the British. Mirza thought that such a request from the Nizam would be greatly appreciated by the Government of India and restore their lost confidence in him and would be immediately responded. Another thing that Mirza advised, was the change of the present Government in Hyderabad, in which, Mirza said, the Indian leaders had no confidence at all. I read Mirza's letter carefully but made no comment. The Nizam did not wait for my comment either and handed over to me the copy of his own reply to Mirza. While appreciating the concern of Mirza over his personal security, and that of his dynasty, the Nizam expressed surprise that Mirza could make such a suggestion as to invite the Government of India to send their troops to protect him. 'Protect against whom?', asked the Nizam of Mirza in his letter and then cut short his reply saying that while he was anxious to come to terms with India, he hoped that some honourable basis would be provided for settlement. He said

he would be prepared to send me to Delhi any time if there was any prospect of a reasonable settlement but he could see no point in sending me in the light of what Mirza had said. I offered no comment and the Nizam was in no mood to receive one either.

I had asked Zain Yar Jung to see me later in the evening to collect my reply to Mirza, prior to his return to Delhi the following morning. He came to me late in the evening after he had met the Nizam again. He was very anxious to have my reply but I really did not know what I could say after all that the Nizam had written. I was more concerned to find out from Zain Yar Jung what line of action the Government of India was likely to take and when the military action was planned to commence. He appeared certain that no campaign was possible before the end of November and that he had very definite information about it.

I told Zain Yar Jung that my reply to Mirza was not ready and that I might send it later. For a long time after he had left I kept wondering if Delhi would now take up this new theme of sending troops to be stationed at Bolarum. Subsequent events proved that my apprehensions were not unfounded. Delhi was certainly indebted to Mirza Ismail for this idea which came to be incorporated in the terms of the notes from Government of India received later.

Soon after the middle of August, I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of India and formally communicated to him that in view of the continued tension between India and Hyderabad, the complete blockade enforced by India which was disrupting the civil life of the population and growing raids on the Hyderabad territory by Indian armed forces, failure of all attempts to come to an amicable settlement and refusal of the Government of India to place the matter before any arbitration as provided in the terms of the Stand-still Agreement subsisting between India and Hyderabad, the Government of Hyderabad had decided to solicit the good offices of the United Nations Organisation in order that the dispute between India and Hyderabad might be resolved and a peaceful and enduring settlement arrived at. The Government of India was also requested to provide the necessary facilities to the Hyderabad delegation to proceed through India to Lake Success. Within a week of sending this request, a reply was received saying

that the Government of India regarded the Indo-Hyderabad dispute a purely domestic matter and that Hyderabad neither historically nor in its present position had a right to make any approach to the United Nations and accordingly they were unable to provide any facility to the Hyderabad delegation to proceed to the headquarters of the United Nations.

The Governor General, Rajagopalachari had forwarded the letter from His Majesty the King of England to the Nizam along with a personal note. The Nizam while acknowledging the note, had solicited the Rajaji to make use of his good offices to have an amicable settlement arrived at between India and Hyderabad. Rajaji sent a long reply to the note and asked the Nizam to act on the advice given to him by Mirza Ismail and take the political situation in his own hand and ban the Razakar Organization who, he said, had been the cause of great deal of insecurity in and around the State; invite the Government of India to post their troops at Bolarum, near Hyderabad, as the British had done and lay a new basis of friendship with the Government of India. The Nizam, in his reply, deplored the erroneous impression prevailing in India of the insecurity of life and property in Hyderabad and said that Mirza was not really fully conversant with the conditions and traditions of the State. He said that the posting of Indian troops in Hyderabad was out of question. He appealed on the other hand to the Rajaji to take a realistic and reasonable view of the situation and not to impose terms that no one with any sense of respect could accept. He expressed his sincere hope that the Rajaji with the great sense of justice and broad vision that he possessed would prevail upon the leaders of India and make an honourable solution of the dispute possible, and assured him that he on his part would do all he could to respond in the spirit of genuine friendship.

A point blank refusal by the Government of India to provide any facility to the Hyderabad delegation to the United Nations was not unexpected. Ways and means had to be found to get the delegation away. The secretary to the delegation had already arrived in London and was in touch with Monckton for drafting the presentation to the United Nations. We all knew that the UN was a complicated and slow moving machinery. Monckton had fully applied himself to

prepare the case in a manner that would attract as early an attention of that body as possible. He had advised that whatever happened, Hyderabad should not denounce the Stand-still Agreement of its own accord. In the meantime, all possible avenues were also being explored to determine the attitude of the various members of the Security Council, which was about to meet in Paris and to acquaint them of the true facts.

CHAPTER XXIX

JINNAH ON DEATH BED

Cutting across intercepting fighter planes provides a certain amount of excitement even if those be of a poor order. That experience came to me on a pale moonlit night when I decided to fly over to Karachi and back in one of Sydney Cotton's four engine Lancasters. The runway was only lit by hurricane lanterns placed at long distances apart but the crew did not seem to mind either the poorly lit runway or the lurking Indian fighter planes. They did not know who I was so they chatted freely. They only feared being bombed or strafed while on the ground. Once up on the air, they seemed to care little for the Indian planes. As for their radar system, they had little respect.

It was important for Hyderabad to know what definitely the stand of Pakistan was going to be in the event of Indian armies invading Hyderabad. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah had more than once conveyed that in the event of armed aggression by India over Hyderabad, Pakistan could not remain a silent spectator. That was good; but the time had now come for a more concrete plan. The task to ascertain the position was entrusted to the Hyderabad Agent General at Karachi but in view of the rapid developments he was repeatedly urging that I should pay an early visit to Karachi myself.

The Nizam was more concerned about the risk involved in the journey, but when he found that it worried me little, he gave his assent. He discussed all the matters and every detail and I took full note of his own points of view. I also agreed to bring back some of his personal documents from Karachi.

Strictest secrecy was obviously essential and not even the Ministers of the Cabinet knew of my plans to visit Karachi. I said goodbye to my wife and sister and told them where I was going at the very last moment. They listened and understood and appreciated the gravity of the mission as well as the risk involved but said nothing. A solitary military van picked me up unnoticed an hour before midnight from

my home and started over a hundred miles journey to the air field where I had to take off. In less than three hours after my leaving home I was up in the air. Physically exhausted, I stretched myself. My vallet and one A.D.C. was with me and they saw that I was properly propped by cushions and covered with a blanket.

I woke up only when the plane had touched the ground at Karachi. Not a soul was within sight on or around the air field. A solitary car which stood at some distance drew up alongside the plane and quietly let me in. Mushtaq Ahmed, the Agent General of Hyderabad, was in the car and gave me a brief account of the situation at Karachi. I learnt that Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah was in Quetta and I would soon have to fly to Quetta for which a plane stood in readiness. The car drove me fast to Ghulam Mohammed's house where he was eagerly awaiting my arrival.

After a hurried shave and a bath I had some coffee with Ghulam Mohammad. He discussed with me several matters, particularly relating to supply of arms and ammunition to Hyderabad forces. He apprised me of the various intelligence reports that had reached him. He told me that India had withdrawn most of her armoured and tank units from Pakistan borders and concentrated them all around Hyderabad. According to him, the bulk of the Indian army units were either around Hyderabad or in Kashmir Valley. I asked him what would be India's position if Pakistan's forces were to invade India. In such an event, he said, according to the intelligence reports, Pakistan's forces would reach Delhi by the time the Indian forces reached Hyderabad. I asked him categorically if Pakistan intended serious business in case Hyderabad was invaded. The only person, he said, who could reply to my question was Jinnah. He was, however, very anxious himself and emphasized over and over again that Hyderabad should transfer to Pakistan as much cash and gold as physically possible to organize effective aid from that end.

I had little time to spare and after quick gulps of coffee, we both rushed to the airport in a closed car. A Pakistan Air Force plane was in readiness there and I entered it accompanied by my valet and A.D.C. I was told that I would have to reach Quetta and then proceed to Ziarat to meet Jinnah. On alighting at Quetta, one or two members

of the personal staff of the Governor General met me and I learnt that I did not have to journey to Ziarat as the Quaid had already moved to Quetta two days before.

I could see anxiety on everyone's face when I reached the Quaid's residence. There were two or three doctors in consultation. I was told that an hour ago some injection had been administered which had caused very severe reaction, and at the moment he was in great agony and in a state of semi-unconsciousness. A little later I met Miss Jinnah. She was having a very anxious time, naturally, and said that it was not the first time that the reaction of the particular injection had been so severe. It was hoped that in a couple of hours he would feel more restful and I should be able to meet him.

It was a little before eleven o'clock in the morning that I had reached Quetta. Every minute was hanging heavy on me. At one o'clock I was served with some luncheon. Most of the time I had spent with Miss Jinnah, hoping all along that the Quaid would soon recover enough to spare me a few minutes. Miss Jinnah kept frequently going into his room and returned disappointed each time that he was no better. Finally, she was able to convey to him that I was in Quetta and had been waiting for a long time in the other room. The Quaid, she told me, only with great difficulty, waved his fingers indicating that his agony was too great.

Around three o'clock in the afternoon I gave up all hopes of meeting Jinnah. I had to be back in Karachi and consult other people and fly back to Hyderabad so as to reach there before daybreak. I still waited for another half an hour, but finally the doctors told me there was little prospect of the Quaid recovering early enough to enable him to meet me. I was anxious also to receive back certain important papers from Jinnah, but neither Miss Jinnah nor anyone among the staff knew where they were. Apparently he had them in his personal custody.

A very dejected and disappointed figure I was when I eventually left Quetta a little before four o'clock in the afternoon. On alighting at the Karachi airport a car again drove me to Ghulam Mohammad's house. A little later, Liaquat Ali Khan dropped in for a few minutes. He was on his way to a dinner party at the American Embassy. He

said he had to go as his absence at the dinner party would be very conspicuous but promised to return early. Ghulam Mohammad accompanied him. Alone I sat down for dinner but did not feel like eating.

I was expecting Liaquat Ali Khan and others to be back by ten o'clock that night but it was much later when they turned up. He was accompanied by Zafarullah Khan and Mohammad Ali. Ghulam Mohammad had returned a little earlier. I told them of the serious condition of health in which I found Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah at Quetta. They all looked surprised. All I could do was to impress upon them the seriousness and urgency of the situation. There was some talk of cabling to London for a specialist. We then reviewed the entire political and strategic situation relating to Hyderabad. According to reliable and counter-checked intelligence report that had been received in Pakistan, the zero hour for the Indian armies to advance into Hyderabad territory was fixed on the twenty-second of September. This was more or less our own information also. They confirmed what Ghulam Mohammad had told me before, that the bulk of the Indian armies and almost all their armoured and tank units were centred around Hyderabad or were in Kashmir. I learnt that Zafarullah Khan was about to leave for the Paris session of the U.N. and would do all he could to place the matter before the Security Council. I wanted a few anti-aircraft guns from Pakistan but was told that they were much too bulky and difficult to be transported. Instead, certain anti-tank guns and anti-tank mines would be easier to transport.

I was anxious to know what Pakistan was going to do in the event of armed aggression of Hyderabad by India. They all knew that Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah had definitely said that Pakistan could not remain a silent spectator of Indian aggression over Hyderabad. Zafarullah Khan was confident that the Security Council would intervene effectively but a straight answer to my question as to what Pakistan would do in the event of invasion of Hyderabad was not forthcoming from anyone of those present. I asked them if I should conclude that Pakistan was not in a position to intervene effectively. No, that was not the case either. It was eventually admitted by Liaquat Ali Khan

and everyone else present that the final word rested with the Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah and no one else was in a position to give a definite answer to my question.

The talks went on and on. All the available details of the military plans of India, the capacity of Hyderabad to resist, the international reactions, attitude of the various members of the Security Council and disposition of the major powers were discussed threadbare. It was past two in the morning. This already meant that it would be daylight before I crossed the Indian territory. Every minute now was adding to the risk involved. I said goodbye to everyone and rushed to the airport. In a matter of minutes we were up in the air and off again.

The crew appeared a little more anxious this time than they were coming towards Karachi. Anyway, in the name of Allah the Great, I had started and did not much care.

After all the strain, I was physically exhausted and once again my valet and my A.D.C. propped me up with cushions and blankets and let me sleep. I told them not to wake me up until we landed and not to worry me with any minor incident on the journey. That was done and when I woke up we were just about landing in broad daylight. I quickly got out of the plane and entered a closed military car. The officer in charge of the airport whispered into my ear that he was happy the plane did not arrive earlier as only some half an hour ago half a dozen Indian fighter planes had hovered round and round the air field and flown eastward in formation.

A few minutes after I had reached home, I had a telephone call from Munshi, the Agent General of India. I readily answered the call. He was anxious that I should lunch or dine with him during the next day or two. I accepted the invitation but gave him some distant date. He probably had scent that I was not seen about in my office or the official residence of the Prime Minister on the previous day and had found out a way to make a personal check on his reports. I then telephoned to the Nizam and soon got ready and was on my way to his palace.

The Nizam's concern over the health of Jinnah and disappointment at my not being able to meet him was as great as my own. I

told him that the zero hour, according to the reports, was between the 20th and 23rd of September. The Army Commander was sent for and we discussed for a long time his plans for defence. The Nizam and I were anxious to know definitely for how long he expected to be able to hold out the invading armies and he estimated that it would be at least eight weeks before the Indian units could reach the Capital. After he had left, I told the Nizam that I would be satisfied and it would serve the purpose even if invaders were held back for four weeks—and, I said, this should be possible.

The next urgent matter on hand was to get away the delegation to the United Nations. The personnel of the delegation had now been finalized. Moin Nawaz Jung was to lead the delegation. Rahim, Sripath Rao, Sham Sunder and Mir Nawaz Jung were to be members and Zahir Ahmed was to be the Secretary of the delegation. Zahir Ahmed had already proceeded to Europe. Moin Nawaz Jung and Sham Sunder were in readiness to leave while Rahim and Sripath Rao were to follow later.

It was arranged that accompanied by Sham Sunder, Moin Nawaz Jung would leave on the night of the 9th of September. His wife was to accompany him. In the afternoon he had a long interview with the Nizam and then hurried home to pack and get ready. Some half an hour before they were due to leave I called at their home. His little girl and boy stood there watching their parents pack. Who knew what all was to follow: I certainly did not want the two little ones on my lap and Moin Nawaz Jung and his wife appeared not too keen to be saddled by the additional responsibility of the children in their hazard. In a stern tone I told them not to be so blind to the coming events and to take the two little ones with them. Hurriedly then, a few clothings and other requisites were packed for them in a couple of suit cases and I bade them all God-speed with unrolled tears in eyes on both sides.

CHAPTER XXX

QUAID-E-AZAM PASSES AWAY

I felt relieved after a wireless message on the following morning from Mushtaq Ahmed which was decoded and put up to me that Moin Nawaz Jung and his family had arrived safely at Karachi. I met the Nizam and we discussed for a long time what role Pakistan would play and how the situation were to be affected if the Quaid-e-Azam's illness were to prolong. The Nizam had much less faith in the efficacy of the United Nations and relied more on any positive action that Jinnah might take. The Commander was sent for and again the issue was discussed as to how and for how long he would be able to hold the invading armies. He reaffirmed categorically that whatever forces India might put into action, it would not be less than eight weeks before they could reach the capital.

Apart from the anticipated invasion by Indian forces, I was also worried of any possible local disturbances that might be created by a number of Indian Congress volunteers that had infiltrated into the State and were in direct touch with Munshi and were engineered by him. So far, harmony had prevailed both in the rural and urban areas between Hindus and Muslims and the common objective of everyone was to save their motherland. Yet, there were small sections of Hindu intelligentia as well as a few Muslims that were both inspired and intimidated by Munshi. There was a danger of their creating a situation that might lead to local clashes and possible sabotages. Pannalal, a prominent Hindu citizen, came to see me one day. He told me that some of his Hindu friends had sent away their families out of Hyderabad for fear of molestation in the event of the situation getting out of control following the invasion. He had refused to send his own family out so far but wanted my personal reactions. I told him that he and his family were welcome to move into my own house and so long as any members of my family were alive he need fear no harm to any of his people. He asked me whether we would really be able to defend Hyderabad. That, I told him, I did not know. What I knew was, I said,

we would go down fighting and not surrender. On the 9th of September the Nizam once again made an appeal to the Governor General, Rajagopalachari, to use his good offices and make his Government give some consideration to the view points of Hyderabad and give a chance of establishing lasting and happy relations between India and Hyderabad. He gave his personal assurance to do everything possible to promote good relations and appealed to the Rajaji to play his role for the common good. The Rajaji's reply, received on the 10th September, only reiterated the previous demands, namely that the Nizam should invite the Government of India to station their troops in the capital of the State and carry out all the other demands of the Government of India.

About this time a significant incident took place on the eastern borders. As on the western border, there were a couple of large enclaves of Indian territory on the eastern borders. There were corresponding enclaves of Hyderabad territory in the Indian Union but these had been virtually occupied by India by refusing passage to any administrative civilian personnel of the Hyderabad Government through the Indian territory. Numberless protests made to the Indian Government through diplomatic channels had fallen on deaf ears and Hyderabad had to content itself by keeping on protesting. Any retaliatory action was strictly forbidden after the sad experience at Nanej on the western borders. On the eastern front, a small company of the regular army was posted at the village of Kodad, well within the borders, for purposes of law and order and to deal with the usual armed raiders who were infesting the surrounding villages. One early morning, when the unit under command of a junior officer was engaged in their normal physical drill, a sizeable tank force of the Indian army advanced over them petering the entire area with 75mm shells. There was heavy loss of civilian life and property and almost the entire village was ablaze within a very short time. The small unit of the Hyderabad army was surrounded and captivated and despite the fact that no resistance whatsoever had been offered, they were indiscreetly fired upon, resulting in many casualties. In fact, from the few wireless signals received, the Army Head Quarters had almost concluded that India had commenced its main invasion programme.

The Indian armoured units then passed through Hyderabad territory into the enclave known as Munigala Zamindari and settled down almost fifty miles within the Hyderabad territory. Why this show of force was made and devastation caused to the civilian life and property was not understood, when the Indian forces could legitimately pass through to their own territory and Hyderabad could neither raise any legal objection nor at that point had the means to offer any physical resistance.

With the capture of the entire unit, only scanty news through scattered civilian channels were coming through. Even though the unit was no more than a small company, equipped only with .303 rifles and meant only to deal with sporadic armed raiders, their complete unpreparedness and unawareness was also alarming. Equally disturbing was the fact that a large number of Indian Sherman tanks were now well settled, in fact, deep within the territory of Hyderabad and fifty miles nearer to the Capital. Everyone, from the Nizam downwards, was very depressed. There was a stormy Cabinet meeting and everyone was alarmed with the unawareness and unpreparedness of the Hyderabad army unit. The Army Commander had a difficult time explaining the position. One thing, in the end, was made clear to the Commander that there will have to be no repetition of such casualness by any other unit on any front. He was also warned that from now on he will have to be ready for a full-fledged invasion by the Indian armies any moment and all his defence units will have to be alerted accordingly. To give a more formal appearance to the decision, I also requested the Nizam to sign a mobilisation order and it was issued the same evening, even though, by that time, we all knew that the Indian invasion was now scheduled to commence on the 20th of the month.

As usual, it was well past two hours after midnight when I stretched myself in bed for my usual two to three hours sleep. I was about to fall asleep when my bedside telephone bell rang. I knew there must be something serious as only the ministers and the army and the police chiefs had access to me at that hour of the night. It was the police chief speaking. He had just received news that the Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah had expired. I felt stunned but soon pulled myself up. For a

few seconds I was not sure whether I was dreaming or awake, but I realised that I was fully awake and all that I heard was too tragically true. More than one message had been received from Karachi, said the police chief, confirming the news.

Despite the physical exhaustion I found it difficult to sleep any longer. The news had already been communicated to the Nizam. I tossed about for another hour in the bed and then rose up. After my morning prayers, I read a few verses from the Quran to bless the departed soul and then got ready for the day. My personal grief was deep, but the untimely death of Jinnah had still more complicated the already delicate issue of Hyderabad and that had to be faced. I called on the Nizam earlier than usual that day. We decided to hold a mass funeral prayers meeting at Mecca Masjid that afternoon and instructions were issued to make the arrangements. A public holiday was declared and then we settled down to review the situation.

I told the Nizam that as a result of the death of Jinnah the attack of the Indian forces may now be expected any moment. The Nizam did not agree with me. He thought that India would hesitate to appear so mean before the world. I told the Nizam that I did not think Pakistan would any longer be in a position now to play an effective role and there he agreed with me. Whatever India did or did not, there was little time to lose. On my way back I called at the Army Head Quarters and spent a good deal of time there checking up with the Army Commander all the defence arrangements and distribution of the army units along the various fronts. The basic difficulty was that the army was too small and the frontier too large. According to the Intelligence reports received, the Indian armies were preparing to pierce through at more than a dozen points. The principal concentration of their troops was along the Bombay-Hyderabad road from the west and the Madras-Hyderabad road from the east. Military preparations of India along these fronts had been in progress for months now and the roads had been closed to the public for many weeks. From these bases they could pierce through in many directions—of course the final objective being the Capital.

The worst feature of the Hyderabad forces was the very scanty artillery. There were in all not even a score of twenty-five-pounder

guns which had to be deployed on the various fronts where concentration of tanks was reported heaviest. At other points only infantry units in varying strengths were posted ranging from a company to a battalion. Wireless contact was set up between the Head Quarters and most of the units but there was not equipment enough to connect all the units.

There were less than ten infantry battalions that Hyderabad could put into action for defences. A couple of other regiments had only ceremonious value and were of little purpose. Even with the ten battalions the equipment and ammunition was extremely limited. Mostly the units were equipped with .303 rifles and sten guns. Each unit had a few small calibre Bren guns and some two inch and three inch mortars. There was a limited supply of anti-tank mines on hand which were sparingly issued to the units which were stationed on the anticipated tank routes. The real handicap with all the units was the lack of field guns. Despite every effort made to secure at least a few 20 mm. Orlikon guns, they could not be brought over in time.

The main disposition of the defending battalions was one on the south west border, one on the western border, one on the north west border, one on the eastern front, and one on the south-east front. One unit was posted at Bidar to be available for use on any of the western, north western or northern fronts but this had to be dispersed later. Similarly one unit was posted at Nakrakal to be available for the Eastern or South Eastern border. Along other fronts the forces were distributed in much smaller strength and were reinforced by local volunteers. A small force was kept at Head Quarters. Owing to the terrain of the country, the danger of advance from the north east and south was comparatively less.

The Army Commander appeared in good spirits. I told him that as a result of the passing away of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, India might advance its date of invasion and launch an attack any moment. Like the Nizam, he did not share that view but assured me that his units were prepared to meet the situation and he had alerted them all to be in readiness.

I was still very uneasy in mind. The deficiency in numbers and the lack of equipment of the forces depressed me. Soon after my

return to the office, Qasim Razvi called on me. The gloom of Jinnah's death hung over everyone alike and neither of us were in a mood of any long conversation. I did not express any undue excitement but made a hint that the Indian attack might come earlier. That did not seem to worry him in the least. In fact, he almost said, the sooner the better. He said he had an occasion to talk to the Army Commander and felt very happy over what he had been told. I was in no mood to say any more. He said he had to go and organise some units of the Razakars. I smiled and let him go. Apparently he little realised the ferocity of the coming onslaught.

I did not think the army had any trained men to blow up the bridges ahead of the advancing Indian troops to retard their progress. I, therefore, enlisted the help of the civil engineering departments for the purpose. Most of the days I spent planning the demolishing works and co-ordinating the units of the army with the various heads of the technical departments and their more trusted assistants. Later, in the afternoon, there was a mass gathering at the Mecca Masjid (the central mosque of the city) for the funeral prayers of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. The Nizam had already arrived when I reached there. Despite the difficulties of transport enormous crowds had gathered and all the roads leading to the mosque were swarming with people. After the prayers, the Nizam asked me if I could see him for a short while in the evening, which I did. I could not stay long with him as K.M. Munshi was to call on me and I had to be back at my residence before he came.

I found Munshi in a very communicative mood. He talked a lot and I had to be quick to discern how much of it was truth and how much the product of his own imagination or deliberate fabrication. Truthfulness and accuracy were not a normal feature of Munshi's statements and I had got used to them and usually could correctly judge where he was factual and when otherwise. For instance, he told me that he had been advised from Delhi that Jinnah had actually expired at Quetta and that that fact had been concealed till his body was flown to Karachi and then the announcement made. Mushtaq Ahmed's message had clearly indicated that the Quaid had died at Karachi and I was not sure whether Munshi had actually received such information

from Delhi or had fabricated the story.

The conversation proceeded from one topic to another. Munshi then told me that the invasion may take place soon and that the key of the situation now lay entirely in my hands. I asked him how and he said that the only way was to allow the Indian forces to march into Hyderabad and take station in the cantonments as the British troops did. In such an event, he said, all would go well and the personal position of the Nizam would be fully secured. He then conveyed his personal assurance that both Nehru and Patel would like me to continue as Prime Minister. He himself would hold the position similar to the British Residents and thereafter everything would be as fine as one could wish!

Munshi realised that I was not paying much attention to his discourse. He then somewhat nervously asked me what he should do and how he would be dealt with in the event of an armed conflict. I told him that the best course for him and his personal staff was to leave Hyderabad prior to the invasion taking place unless it was coming so soon as to make it physically impossible for him to leave. For a moment he did not know what to say. Finally he came out that it might even be a physical impossibility but, more than that, he did not think the Government of India would permit him to leave Hyderabad. He then made an attempt to remind me that Hyderabad also had an Agent General at the other end. I agreed with him and said that the treatment meted out to the respective Agent Generals would be on reciprocal basis. Finally I told him that still the best course for him was to leave Hyderabad if that were possible at all; otherwise, I said, he would be moved to some suitable place in Hyderabad with his personal staff and would be treated as a guest but would not be allowed to have any contact with anyone outside. He appeared very uneasy and argued that if he was left a free agent he would be able to render some useful service. I did not say anything in reply and after a few attempts to change my views or to draw any further information from me he felt that any further efforts on his part would not be of much use. It was obvious from the trend of Munshi's conversation that the zero hour was not far, although he had been extremely cautious all along, not

to indicate anything definite. There was mingled expression of fear and joy in the tail end of his conversation and despite his efforts he could conceal neither.

It was nearly midnight when Munshi left. It was too late in the night to contact the Nizam or to convey to him the substance of our conversation. I, however, communicated to the Army Commander that I anticipated the advance of the Indian armies the following morning; he was emphatic that according to his very reliable information there would be no move earlier than the 20th of the month. Even so, I said, the units on all the fronts should be alerted and that there was every possibility of the attack taking place the very next morning. I then made the usual tour of the various munition plants. On my way back, I left my car and personal staff in it and walked unnoticed to one or two ill-lit wayside tea-stalls which appeared unusually crowded at that time of the night. Everyone seemed to be gossiping freely and in loud tones. Everyone seemed to realise that an attack from the Indian Union was imminent; each one had his own views on the defence of the State and each one appeared to have a plan of his own in the emergency. One thing was, however, remarkable—no one appeared nervous, or critical of one another. For the moment I felt that I was about the only person who was really worried.

I returned home more tired than usual and felt that I could ill-afford to waste any part of the two hours that I had at my disposal for sleep.

I must have been very exhausted, as it was much later than usual when I woke up. I had very nearly missed my morning prayers, so after a quick ablution I made a dash and said my prayers. I then asked my valet if there were any telephone calls for me: No—there was none. I would have certainly been informed by now if any reports of the movement of the Indian armies on any front had been received. I thought I would ring up the Army Commander and find out if all was well but I resisted the temptation so as not to make myself appear scared. Instead, I rang up the police chief on the excuse of asking for some further particulars of a minor railroad accident that had been reported the previous night. No, nothing serious had happened nor had he anything extraordinary to report beyond the

small armed raids on two or three fronts which had almost become a daily routine. Perhaps, I said to myself, I was wrong in my guess and the Army Commander's intelligence reports were right that the zero hour had been set for the twentieth of the month.

When I paid my usual morning visit to the Nizam, I found him chatting with the Army Commander. There were the same questions as to when the Indian armies were likely to advance and for how long the Hyderabad forces would be able to hold out. The Army Commander was confident and optimistic as ever and the Nizam was shrewdly doubtful of his statements as usual. After his departure the Nizam asked me how I really felt about the whole affair. I told him that I did not believe all that the Army Commander had said about his capacity to hold back the Indian armies for two to three months. I told him that I would be satisfied if he could check the advance of the Indian forces for three to four weeks but, at any cost, they should be prevented from reaching the Capital in less than two weeks. That was the minimum time, I said, which would be needed for the Security Council to be able to take any effective action against an open aggression.

I told the Nizam that the thing that was worrying me most at the moment was the unguarded optimism of the Army Commander. I had seriously begun to doubt if he was conscious of the gravity of the situation and if he had sized up the severity of the coming onslaught. I had begun to wonder whether his professional military gestures indicated his mastery over the situation or were mere imitations without substance. He certainly was a good disciplinarian and appeared to keep the armed forces in good order, but was that enough to plan any real strategy and conduct multi-front war operations? Another matter which caused me a great deal of concern was his very scanty knowledge of the geography and the topography of the various parts of the country. He seemed to totally rely on his lieutenants in this respect and not infrequently I had to guide him in the study of local maps. The Nizam intently heard and fully shared my views and at once concluded that I should replace him with some one else. But, the choice of any substitute of El' Edroos at such a crucial moment was not such an easy matter. None appeared worthy of the task among the senior

officers of the army; the appointment of a junior officer was likely to create serious administrative problems and possibly shake the morale of the armed forces at a time when it needed to be the highest.

The Nizam and I deliberated for a long time over the problem. Another unfortunate situation was created by the resignation of the capable Chief of the Staff who was a Britisher and had received instructions from the High Commissioner of the U.K. at Delhi to resign, as he could not raise arms against one of His Majesty's Dominions as India then was. Taking all the factors into consideration we finally agreed to leave the existing set-up undisturbed and make the best of the situation as it was.

I spent the rest of the day mostly at the Army Head Quarters. On my personal request, the British Chief of the Staff had made himself available to me for consultation and advice in mufti and promised to do so until the actual outbreak of an armed conflict with the Indian forces. The time spent appeared to have as much educative value to myself as to the Army Commander!

CHAPTER XXXI

THE INVASION STARTS

It was in the early hours of the morning of the thirteenth of September (1948) that I was awakened by the shriek ringing of bed side telephone bell. This time it was on the direct line between the army Commander and myself. Even before I lifted the receiver I was sure it would be a report on the advance of the Indian armies—yes it was. The army Commander was telling me that within the last fifteen minutes he had received messages from five different sectors of the advance of the Indian units on a mass scale. As he was talking to me he had some more reports of intense bombing of the aerodromes at Bidar, Aurangabad and Warangal. He wanted to know what he should do. What did he expect me to say, I asked him, and then added "of course ask your boys to resist the advance". "Very good, Sir", he said and rang off. I then called him again on telephone and asked him to keep me constantly advised of the reports from various fronts. He said he was getting ready to leave for his office and would personally take charge of directing all the operations. 'Bravo!' I said, and wished him best of luck.

This was some half an hour before my usual time to wake up. After my morning prayers, I soon made myself ready for the day. I had, in the meantime, received some calls from the police chief and some more calls from the Army Head Quarters reporting more points on which the Indian armies had started advancing and more places which were being bombed by the Indian Air Force.

Before going to the Nizam I called at the Army Head Quarters. The army Commander had set up operational command in his own room and was busy with several officers of the General Staff pinning flags on a wide stretched map indicating the position of the invading armies as well as of the defending units. From the various intelligence reports that had been received previously and the situation as reported since early that morning, it was confirmed that the main thrust was from the west, along the Sholapur-Hyderabad road and from the

east, along the Masulipatam-Hyderabad road. The thrust from both these directions was spear-headed by large units of Sherman tanks. At three other points along the north - west front lighter Stuart type tanks were leading the attack and were followed by armoured cars and motorised infantry units. At five other points along the northern front, due west, the advance was reported by armoured cars and motorised units only. On the north, due east border, railway trains carried the invading troops across the river Wardha. On the east, in addition to the main thrust along the Masulipatam road by the Sherman tanks, the border had been pierced at several points by lighter tanks and armoured cars. On the Southern front, due west, motorised infantry units were reported advancing at as many as five different points. And some more were said to be attempting to cross the boundary river of Thungabhadra by the railway bridge. In a very short time the whole map appeared dotted all along the border by flags indicating the Indian army units in varying strength and numbers.

India had massed a complete Sherman tanks brigade at Sholapur for their main thrust supported by one full motorised infantry division. Preparations had been going on at this point for many months and the areas around had been sealed off from the public. From here they could advance towards the capital of the state either along the main road passing through Naldrug, Humnabad and Zahirabad or they could by-pass Naldrug and march along Osmanabad-Latur road to Bider and then turn South East towards Zahirabad or follow some other route from Bidar to the Capital. More than the resistance from the defending troops of Hyderabad,, the Indian armies were faced with difficult terrain of the country they had to pass through. This sector of the Deccan plateau was liberally traversed by numerous hill ranges and numberless deep ravines. The advancing units, therefore, had no choice but to follow the regular roads both for the advance of tanks as well as the motorised units.

The line of advance of the Indian armies from the west had been anticipated and Hyderabad's first line of defence was organised at the Naldrug pass. A battalion strength with four twenty-five pounder field guns were to hold the pass. The river near the Naldurg village flowed through a deep gorge with hills rising three to four hundred feet high on

either side. The road wound its way on either bank crossing the masonry bridge at the bottom of the gorge. The plan was to blow up the bridge and hold the pass from the left bank for as long as possible. The terrain of the country did not permit by-passing of this point unless a very long detour was made either upstream or downstream through rugged country. The territory beyond the pass, including the headquarters of the district of Osmanabad was left undefended. The second main defence organised was on the rugged banks of the Manjera river near Latur to check the advance towards Bidar which was a focal point in defence strategy. Behind Naldrug, along the main Sholapur-Hyderabad road, defences were planned in depth. Some forty miles from Naldrug lay Dalam: not a very good site to defend but good enough to retard the advance to some extent. Behind Dalam was Humnabad some hundred miles from the capital which from the point of view of defence was almost as good as Naldrug. Here, for about ten miles, the road wound itself through a very hilly country and there were numerous points all along to effectively stop the advancing armies. After this, about half way down the road to the capital, there was only one other belt which could afford natural defence. There after, the road was almost clear upto the capital, except a very small range of hills at Lingampali, hardly ten miles away from the metropolis.

The tank brigade of the Indian army advanced in the early hours of the morning of 13th and after coming some ten miles, a small column turned north towards Osmanabad but the main force moved eastwards towards Naldrug. In support of the land forces the Indian Air Force carried on ceaseless bombing of both the flanks of the Naldrug pass. The forward tanks moved cautiously but resolutely until they came within the point-blank range of the field guns of the defending units at Naldrug. With a fair amount of accuracy the gunners blew up six (another report said eight) of the forward Sherman tanks. This caused utter confusion in the advancing column and the whole column speedily turned back towards its starting base.

The unit heading northward had met no resistance of any kind. They safely entered the town of Osmanabad after intense bombardment and then continued northward towards Yedsi with the object of turning East towards Latur. Their progress, despite complete absence

of any resistance, was very limited.

From the east, another Sherman tanks unit of the Indian armies some of which had safely lodged themselves well within the territory a few days earlier in the Munagala enclave, started moving toward Suryapet. For a while it was not clear whether the columns would directly move west towards the capital via Suryapet or move a little South and then follow the Miryalguda road. The defence arrangements on this road had been made on the eastern banks of the Musi River but without any fieldguns and equipped only with mortars. Their efficacy was extremely doubtful; in fact it was the weakest point and it was feared that the Indian armies would advance along this road and after crossing the low level Musi causeway would choose any of the three or four roads that led to the capital. However, the advance of the Indian armies on the 13th was only reported towards Suryapet which meant that they had chosen to move along the diret road where the defence arrangements had been comparatively stronger.

The news from the other parts of the eastern border were not so alarming. Apparently small detachments were advancing supported by light Stuart tanks but had made little progress. The worse news till the moment had come from the Rajura side on the banks of the Wardha river where a railway bridge linked the state with Indian territory. A railway engineer with a small detachment of army and police was left in charge of this route and his business was only to blow up the railway bridge in time to prevent any advance. At the zero hour, he was reported to be sleeping about six miles away from the bridge and when the Indian armies loaded in carriages, started rolling over the bridge, firing machine guns and cannon from the locomotive in front there was no one handy to set the fuses. The Indian armies safely crossed and established a bridge-head on the southern bank of the river. Later, defending gangs were able to blow up the smaller bridges in the interior so as to hamper further advance along the railway line but that was of little use.

On the other fronts, the news from the northern and the north western borders was very scanty and confused and it was difficult to assess the situation correctly. My main anxiety was over the Hadgaon-Nanded and Hingoli-Nanded roads. There were some confused news

from Jalna side and there was practically no news of the Aurangabad borders. The western border of the Bir district was practically undefended, but not much troop concentration of the Indian armies in that direction had been reported either. On the other hand, a fair amount of activity had been reported from the extreme south western strip particularly around Muneerabad and along the Hubli Muneerabad railway line. With a small number of regular troops the defences in this sector comprised chiefly of the volunteers organised by the engineers of Irrigation Department and from all accounts they put up about the best performance. They had almost wiped off an ill-trained Mysore battalion which had advanced in that sector under the command of Indian officers. They took possession of practically the whole section of the meter gauge railway line that passed through the Hyderabad territory. In fact, it appeared that the volunteers had gone across the bordering Thungabhadra river and were about to occupy Hospet and some other towns in the Indian territory.

While varying reports were pouring in from different fronts, the worst fate appeared to be that of the airfields and landing strips all over the country. The airfields of Warangal, Bidar, Raichur, Adilabad and Aurangabad were being incessantly showered with heavy bombs from the Indian Air Force. They were all defenceless and yet so frenzied was the bombing that out of every five bombs dropped, hardly one fell over the runways proper. Only at the Hakimpet Aerodrome, some fifteen miles away from the city of Hyderabad were there any anti-aircraft installations and probably the Indian Air Force knew of them as no attempt was ever made to approach anywhere near this airfield.

After spending some time at the Army Head Quarters, I called on the Nizam, a little earlier than my usual hour each morning. From the early hours of the morning he had been kept informed of the developments over the telephone at every few minutes interval. We did not waste time over any formalities or on introducing the subject. We were soon discussing the latest phase of the invasion and the future plans. The army Commander was sent for and the Nizam appeared deeply interested in every detail and was likely to prolong his discourse when I reminded him that war operations were going on and the

army Commander could not afford to be away for long from the Army Head Quarters. The Nizam agreed and readily let him go. A little later I also begged leave of him to go and promised to call in later in the day.

During the course of my conversations with the officers of the General Staff I discovered that the army was still using for wireless messages the code that had been introduced years before and even in the peace-time should have been discarded long ago. When I suggested that the Indian armies might as well be in the possession of the code, more than one officer admitted that it might easily be so. I was not only shocked but felt deeply grieved. I was told that a new wave length had been adopted, but it was certain that the Indian armies must have picked that up long before now. As I sat there going more and more into details of the various arrangements, the more I was surprised at the lack of planning and foresight on the part of the army Commander despite an enthusiastic and a reasonably efficient staff with him. The medical service, rations, transport, distribution of arms and ammunitions and stores, in fact every arrangement seemed incomplete and the army Commander was now referring to me every detail and looking to me for guidance and assistance from the civil departments.

I felt that my place now on was in the control room of the Army Head Quarters. There was no time to accuse any one for the neglect or folly. The real folly had been committed in placing undue faith in the capacity of the army Commander. There was no redress for it now. The Nizam was bewildered when I reported to him the situation later. Wireless messages had been pouring in from all fronts and being decoded and put up. I almost felt that the coding and decoding was a mere waste of time as the Indian armies must be decoding them as fast as our own troops. I did not, however, interfere with the arrangement. Every message was now being put up to me by the army Commander and he was issuing orders after receiving my concurrence. His self-confidence had completely gone and he appeared very worried and almost completely lost. I advised him not to lose heart and face the situation boldly and do his best. I then rushed to meet the Nizam. It was as important for me to meet him frequently and sustain his nerves. From the Nizam I hurried to my office to attend

to a few important matters and for a bite of lunch. My right hand man during the crisis on the civil side was Mahboob Ali Khan—an experienced Civil Servant of great capacity and stamina and a perfectly cool head. I gave him a brief account of the situation and asked him to circulate a top secret note on the subject for the information of the Ministers and also for transmission to Mushtaq Ahmed the Agent General of Hyderebad at Karachi. He was kept fully posted for his own information and for transmission onwards to the Hyderabad Delegation at the United Nations as well as to the Agent General in Pakistan. Mahboob Ali Khan had been appointed as Director General of Co-ordination, a senior post that I had created soon after my assuming office for handling more urgent and important affairs directly on my behalf in any sphere of administration. After the invasion started, one of the jobs entrusted to him was to have K.M. Munshi the Agent General of India shifted from his residence to the Government Guest House, that was meant for big dignitaries visiting the State. I had asked him to take due care to make the shifting as smooth and as courteous as possible. He informed me that the job had been done through military personnel in a dignified and satisfactory manner and that Munshi was now safely lodged at the Lake-View Guest House. A company of Indian troops that guarded Munshi's residence had been disarmed and interned in the military Barracks. I asked him to get this news specially broadcast over the radio with a view to ensure a reciprocal treatment of the Agent General of Hyderabad at Delhi.

When I reached the Army Head Quarters after a couple of hours' absence, I was shocked to hear from the Commander that a large portion of the unit defending the Naldrug pass had been wiped out by aerial bombing along with heavy shelling by the advancing tanks in the morning. He had, therefore, ordered what remnants were left, to withdraw to Dalam. He also told me that two of the field guns had been put out of action by the bombing and one gunner had blown up a gun and himself along with it. The fate of the remaining gun was not known. I could not follow the reasoning of the army Commander in issuing orders for retreat when the spearhead of the Indian attack had returned back after receiving the fire in the morning and at least till that moment had not reappeared. I then asked him almost franti-

cally if the bridge in the Naldrug gorge had been blown up? No, it had not. The bridge had been fully dynamitted and all that was left to be done was to put the fuses. The remnants of the defending units had abandoned the site and were in retreat to Dalam, the bridge had been left behind intact and the few field guns that we had in the sector lost. Why could reinforcements not be rushed to Naldrug instead of falling back to Dalam? That I was told was not physically possible in the face of the heavy aerial bombing.

My confidence had been completely shaken. I gave strict orders that from now on there shall be no major operational move without my prior concurrence and the army Commander most readily agreed to comply with them. Further reports from the western sector were very depressing. By four o'clock in the afternoon it was reported that the main column of the Indian armies was safely crossing the Naldrug gorge over the bridge that had so foolishly been left intact and without as much as a rifle shot to disturb their advance. The Army Commander assured me that the Indian units would not be able to advance much further that day and he argued that even they were made of flesh and blood and would be unable for the day to endure the strain any more. According to him, they would need almost the whole of the following day to approach Dalam. And, he finally agreed with me that we should try and immediately abandon Dalam and fall back on Humnabad where the terrain of the country and the hills provided a more suitable opportunity to put up a reasonable defence. Messages were immediately flashed to the defending units at Dalam to fall back immediately to Humnabad well before the Indian armies could overtake them.

The army Commander had stretched a camp cot in the command room at the Army Head Quarters and proposed to be there all the time. The general staff working in rotation had orders to keep him posted of the developments round the clock and also to keep me advised of all the more important changes on the battle fronts. After spending about an hour with the Nizam, later in the evening I sat in the army Commander's room till late at night, but there were no further reports of any significance except of the continuous bombing of the various airfields. In the past, the Bidar airfield was mostly

used for the import of arms and ammunitions. Later, owing to constant and unchecked hovering of the Indian air force planes over this area, the incoming aeroplanes had been directed to land at the Warangal airfield. For some time the Indian air force pilots had not known the change made and had continued to hover over the Bidar airfield. Later, they occasionally circled over the Warangal airfield, but more frequently hovered over the Chikalthana airfield, although it had never been used for the landing of any incoming aircraft. It was feared that their continued reconnaissance was with the intention of landing on that airfield with a view to occupy and hold it. Thereupon, I decided to make that airport unserviceable and unfit for landing by digging trenches across the runway and by placing road rollers and a few heavy articles all over the place. With both Bider and Warangal airfields so much battered, the incoming aircraft with supplies were all directed to land at Hakimpet which at the time was the civil airport of the capital and where some sort of anti-aircraft installations had been improvised and installed.

After the failure to blow up the vital bridges in the Naldrug gorge and the railway bridge on the Wardha river, I concluded that the Army was definitely unfit to plan or to execute any demolition works. The only people that I could look to carry out that job was the engineering staff of the Public Works Department who indeed had at one time built all those structures. I had a ready response from them to undertake the task of demolition despite all the peril involved. I took upon myself to co-ordinate their work with that of the army units along the various fronts. There was a limited stock of demolition gun cotton slabs but there was enough dynamite to go round. It was now mainly the question of doing the job efficiently and unfailingly and at the exact moment and for that I found a fine batch of well trained men ready with all the zeal and courage that was needed.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE INVASION PROCEEDS

The second day of the invasion, 14th of September, started with no serious news from any front, except that it was reported that Jalna, an important town in the north west had been recaptured from the Indian troops. I could make no sense as the fall of Jalna had not been reported before. The army Commander was of the opinion that the Indian armies were not likely to make any serious advance on that day as they would need time to consolidate their positions and their lines of supply as well as provide some rest to the troops.

As the day advanced, good and bad news started pouring in from various directions. In its mid-day broadcast the Delhi Radio reported that the advancing troops were meeting with very stiff resistance on all fronts. Nothing, I thought, could be more be-fooling. A more apt statement would have been to say that the advancing Indian armies had met surprisingly little resistance. The previous day's experience had been that the Indian units appeared bold and brave only as long as there was no resistance, but even a few rifle shots could scare away their armoured units. That had been noticed on almost every front. At no point, where the Indian armies were not supported by tanks, had they made any advance even against a handful of untrained irregulars. A batch of volunteers mostly raised from the labour force working on an irrigation scheme on the south west border near Munirabad, supported by a company of regular troops had not only stopped two battalions of the Indian armies but had practically wiped off a whole battalion of the Mysore State Forces and had gone across the Thungabhadra river and well advanced into the Madras territory. Sadiq Ali Khan, a brave young engineer passing along the road in a jeep car had been ambushed by the Indian Forces and killed. There were many casualties besides among the volunteers, but that did not deter them in any way. All that they asked was some more ammunition and a few more arms, if possible, and they would keep on fighting against all odds.

A section of the main advancing column of the Indian Forces from the west had, on the previous day, turned northwards and occupied the undefended town of Osmanabad. More news had now been received from that front. The Indian tank units had entered the town after intense shelling even after they knew that the town was not defended. After occupying the town, they settled down to massacre the civilians and were particularly hunting down every Muslim in the place, men, women and children—all alike. A few, who could flee, had taken shelter in the fields and tried to hide themselves behind the standing crops. After the main massacre was over, the column left a few troops behind to complete the job and proceeded to Yedsi and was expected to advance towards Latur and then on to Bider across the Manjera causeway. But, there was little or no further advance reported of this column on the following day. The defences on the Bidar side of the causeway were intact and it was hoped that they would be able to resist the advance to some extent. After the fall of Naldrug, it did not appear likely that the Indian armies would find it necessary to launch any major offensive from Latur side. I said this to the army Commander and suggested that part of the defending forces as well as the twenty-five pounder field guns be pulled back from that sector and be stationed at Bidar or even brought back well behind Zahirabad to enable organise a more effective defence in the hill ranges behind Zahirabad. He did not favour this idea. He argued that if the Indian forces were to break through to Bidar and advance from there they would have more than one alternative route to the Capital and it would be impossible to foresee the route that they would follow or to adequately man all the possible routes. I agreed with the Commander in the end and let him have his own way.

Earlier in the afternoon, the main column of the Indian armoured units which after crossing the Naldrug pass had been advancing towards Dalam, was thereafter expected to proceed towards Humnabad. But they were reported to have turned northwards and taken the road to Kaliani. This move was totally unexpected and could not be understood at all. On the map there was a wide stretch of rugged country, least suited for a quick advance of tanks or of transport lorries. What could be the object of their advance towards Kaliani? There

were no direct means of communication with Kaliani and there was not even a radio transmission set anywhere in the region. We were all left guessing.

Later in the afternoon I was with the Nizam when the bad news arrived that Aurangabad, a large city in the extreme north west of the State, had fallen in the hands of the Indian Armies. We both felt struck by the tidings and were silent for a few moments. Two large drops of tears rolled down the Nizam's eyes. I felt the same way but could ill-afford any such exhibition of my inner grief. The Nizam almost apologised for his lack of self-control and I soon left him and went to the Army Head Quarters. I learnt that Jalna was still in our hands although a two pronged advance on this city was in progress by motorised units supported by light tanks from north and from west. The fall of Jalna by night or on the following day appeared imminent and there were no means to protect that sector. Another unit from the west was advancing towards Bir, and the fate of Bir also appeared sealed.

The army Commander had been at the desk for almost thirty-six hours. I advised him to retire and rest for a while. He had a camp cot in the control room and stretched himself out. I took charge of the directions and told him that I would wake him up only if some thing serious happened.

More messages had now started arriving from the eastern front. The route from the east was commanded by two irrigation canals of Wyra and Palair and I had given instruction to let out full discharges from the two reservoirs and breach the canals lower down. This operation had been successfully performed and a fairly wide stretch of heavy black soils of the area was inundated. The roads had been washed away in places and that had retarded the movement of the Indian troops. In fact a few tanks and quite a number of other transport vehicles had got bogged in that area. The stretch of lands inundated by these canals was limited to areas east of Suryapet and could not extend far enough south. Other units of Indian Army had advanced along the Huzurabad-Miryalguda road and crossed the Musi causeway. The defences on the western bank of the Musi Causeway had turned out to be completely ineffective to resist the advance; in fact

there was almost no news of the fate of the defending units of that sector. The advancing column had two alternative routes before it: it could either go north and take Nalgonda and proceed to Nakrekal to join the main column advancing from Suryapet side or go further west and take up any of the various roads that lead to the Capital. But, by night fall of the second day of invasion, no serious advance of these forces had been reported. In the meantime, I had ordered the Civil Engineers of the Public Works Department to blow up some of the arches of the heavy masonry bridge upon the Musi river along the Suryapet-Nakrekal road and two of the main arches had been successfully blown up. I then ordered opening out the flood gates of the Himayat Sagar lake and flood the lower reaches of the river bed to prevent the advancing armies from attempting to ford across the river bed at any point near the blown up bridge.

There were brief sessions of the Cabinet to review the events. I called upon the Nizam again late in the evening. He was less emotional now than he had been in the afternoon. I posted him up with the latest information received from the various parts. He listened to me, but I noticed that for the first time he appeared minus his usual enthusiasm. I returned to the Army Head Quarters and found that the army Commander was back at his desk after a few hours' rest. Qasim Razvi called in and I asked him for the first time if he could have some Razakars ready for action as we badly needed men for the southern sector as well as the eastern sector and there were no more troops available. His response was spontaneous and he offered to provide as many volunteers as needed—only I should try and provide them some arms. He came back after a tour of various localities and informed me that almost four battalion strength of Razakars were ready to go in any direction as may be necessary. In fact, he had drafted two of his own sons in the very first battalion that he organised and advised me that it could go to the zone where the danger was greatest.

It was long past midnight when the army Commander suggested that I should go home and snatch some rest. He was certain that nothing very startling was likely to happen during the rest of the night. I left him and went to the office where my confidential staff was busy coding and decoding cypher messages of Mushtaq Ahmed, the Agent

General of Hyderabad at Karachi. He was the only link that Hyderabad had with the outside world over the wireless. He had a very small staff with him and had to mostly rely on his own family members to deal with the coding and decoding of messages. He was kept in touch almost hourly with the developments on Hyderabad side and he in turn kept the Hyderabad Delagation advised of the situation and conveyed all the instructions to the delegation through Mir Nawaz Jung, the Agent General of Hyderabad at London. Mushtaq had a nerve racking and strenuous task to perform. He was shouldering the responsibility of keeping the Government of Pakistan advised of the developments in Hyderabad and invoke such assistance as was possible. He was also responsible from whatever source and base possible for flying such arms and ammunition as could be available. From the number of messages passing between him and myself, it was obvious that with his little staff, he was working round the clock and was sparing no effort on his part.

The pivot of the defence policy of Hyderabad was the great hope and faith held in the United Nations Organisation to stand by right against brute force. Timely and effective move by the Security Council which was then in session at Paris was the most vital factor. The Hyderabad Delegation could reach London only on the 13th of September, to a great extent on the assumption that India's offensive was scheduled to commence about a week later. Its departure from Karachi had been delayed to some extent by the untimely death of the Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. Moin Nawaz Jung had been warned before his departure that as a result of the Quaid's passing away, India might accelerate its plans. In any case, he or his colleagues were not going to waste a minute. When he reached Cairo, on his way to London, he got the news that the offensive of the Indian armed forces had already commenced. He rushed and changed over to another plane in the hope of reaching London earlier. But, as misfortune would have it, that plane got delayed in Tripoli by a few hours owing to engine trouble. Eventually the Delegation reached London late in the evening of the 13th. They left London by the first available plane on the 14th morning for Paris. At Paris they were met by Zahir Ahmad, the Secretary of the Delegation and Professor Lauterpacht

whose services had been secured already through the good offices of Monckton as constitutional adviser. There were besides, the representatives of Coward Chance & Co. to assist along with Foster, who had been named by Monckton. Moin Nawaz Jung immediately on arrival established contact with the Acting Secretary General of the United Nations—Mr. Sobolev. The requisite documents were filed and all formalities hurriedly concluded. The earliest that the meeting of the Security Council could be convened was on the afternoon of the 16th September. Monckton was to join the Delegation at Paris any time that his services may be called for.

On the morning of the 15th of September, the threat from eastern side appeared more menacing. There was little news from the western front and little was known of the main column of the Indian tanks and armoured units that had marched towards Kaliani from Dalam. I found the Nizam in a very depressed mood that morning. The army Commander was sent for and the military situation reviewed without much warmth or enthusiasm. The army Commander was less buoyant now and no longer appeared confident of himself. The Nizam asked me how I felt about the situation and if I still hoped that the Hyderabad defences would be able to hold out till any decision is taken by the Security Council. I told the Nizam that I did not expect any positive action from the Security Council under a week more and it was imperative for us to hold out for that much time at any cost. The army Commander thought that the advance from the west could be checked for that much time or even longer but he was more worried over the column advancing from the East as he had practically no forces left with him to put into action. In any case he believed that it would not be an altogether impossible task to resist the advancing armies from either side for a week more before they could reach the Capital.

There was a brief meeting of the Cabinet and soon after the meeting I was informed by an A.D.C. that the Delhi Radio had announced that the main column advancing from the west was within sight of the minarets of the historic city of Bidar. I could not believe the A.D.C. and walked into the side room where the Radio had been tuned to the mid-day broadcast from Delhi. The entire news bulletin was covered

only by the activities of the Indian Armed Forces engaged in Hyderabad and in the summary at the end it emphatically repeated that the Indian troops were well within sight of the minarets and towers of the historic city of Bidar. Soon after I returned to my desk I had a phone call from the army Commander. He had just then received signal from Bidar that a very large tanks and armoured cars column was moving along the Kalyani-Bidar road and could be clearly seen from tower tops. Kalyani-Bidar road! I gasped and glanced at the map over the wall in front of me. There was no road shown on the map. I picked up the telephone and called the Chief Engineer of roads and asked him if there was any road between Kalyani and Bidar. Yes, there was. A new first class road had been just completed and opened for traffic. It was to be shown on the new road map that was being prepared for the next print. Good heavens, I did not know that the road had been completed from Kalyani to Bidar and opened for traffic. The army Commander of course knew much less. The army reconnaissance and intelligence did not know anything about it. The only people who seemed to know it were the Indian troops!

This was about the rudest blow that I had yet received. Bidar was only a supply base. There were no combat forces at Bidar. The road from Kalyani to Bidar had wound its way though very rugged country and even a small force at strategic points could have considerably delayed the progress of the Indian armed units. But, there was just no defence there and the Indian armies had a care-free and safe march right upto Bidar. By reaching Bidar they had by-passed and outflanked the strong defending unit on the Latur Bidar Causeway and in a few hours' time could be right behind the strong-hold of Humnabad. A very critical situation had developed. Bidar was only some twelve miles from Zahirabad while the distance between Zahirabad and Humnabad was well over forty miles. It all seemed such a complete mess. Could the army Commander handle a situation so serious when he had failed to deal with far more favourable situations?

I rushed to the Army Head Quarters and a hurried conference of the General Staff and senior army officers present was called. The Latur units were now as good as lost. There was no way out for them other than Bidar. There was only one question: could the battalions

at Humnabad be pulled back behind Zahirabad to defend the Zahirabad-Hyderabad road which still had some very advantageous defence points. It was imperative that they be brought back behind Zahirabad if any further resistance was to be offered as there were left no further troops to deploy.

The army Commander was of the opinion that the troops at Humnabad would be so much physically tired that it would be almost impossible for them to move overnight a distance of over fifty miles. The junior members of the General Staff thought that it was not such an impossible task. It was argued that the Indian troops and specially their tanks crew would be much more tired out and it could not be so easy for them to get through Bidar city and make a dash to Zahirabad to be able to cut off the line of retreat of the Hyderabad troops. I passed the final orders to move back the troops from Humnabad range with all possible haste to the hill ranges about twelve miles behind Zahirabad with their twenty-five pounder guns and other heavy equipment. I also passed orders to evacuate Bidar atonce and carry away as much of the equipments from that base as may be possible. The question came up as to what would happen if the Indian armoured column chose to follow some other alternative road from Bidar to the capital instead of proceeding along the Zahirabad main road. That was possible, I agreed, and if they did so it would just be too bad for us. In any case, I said, we had no means to defend all other possible routes. The army Commander in the end agreed that in all probability the advancing units would follow the Zahirabad-Hyderabad route and we better prepare the defences along that road.

After issuing the orders at the army Head Quarters I returned to my office. The events had been so rapidly taking such an adverse turn that it was difficult to make any plans. Could the Security Council act with such speed as to be of any use at all and how effective could they be? After some quick thinking I came to the conclusion that there were only two alternatives left: one could be to broadcast an appeal to India to halt and stop the bloodshed and get ready to accept whatever reasonable terms that India might yet offer: if there be no response to such an appeal then go down fighting to the last man. The other was to lay down arms immediately and cease all resistance. I preferred

the former and in the afternoon of the fifteenth a passioned appeal from me to the Indian leaders was broadcast from the Hyderabad Radio. I also sent a messge to Mushtaq Ahmed to request the Government of Pakistan to immediately urge upon the Indian Government to stop the bloodshed and mediate to bring about whatever settlement that might be possible under the circumstances. My appeal on the Hyderabad Radio was repeated several times but until late that night there was no reference made to it in any of the Delhi broadcasts.

I saw the Nizam earlier in the evening and later again. His mood was changing from hour to hour. He was depressed and had lost all confidence in himself and repeatedly asked me if I still held any hope of action from the Security Council of the United Nations. I had no news from that side ever since the morning and there was little that I could tell him. I still held that there was a chance and on that account we should hold on for as long as possible.

The eastern front and southern fronts also appeared far from satisfactory but not quite so serious as on the west. When I reached the Army Head Quarters a little after midnight, the army Commander had stretched himself for some rest but the General Staff was about and active as ever. No fresh developments had been reported from any side and it was unlikely that there would be much change in the situation overnight. Mushtaq Ahmad had managed to despatch some long range anti-tank guns on a couple of aircrafts. The unloading of the long and heavy pieces had presented some problem and eventually they were brought over to the Army Head Quarters and assembled. I examined the guns and how I wished we only had a few more of them and a few days earlier. Any way they were rushed off to the eastern front where there were practically no heavy guns of any description.

CHAPTER XXXIII

DETERIORATION OF SITUATION WITHIN

The invasion of Hyderabad by the armed forces of India had become the headline news of the press all over the world and the members of the Security Council of the United Nations, now in session at Paris, were fully seized of the situation through the press, their respective governments as well as the delegates both from Hyderabad and India. With rare exceptions, there was a wholesale condemnation of aggression committed by India and the public resentment both in the United Kingdom and the United States was particularly strong. Would all the pressure of public opinion from almost every country of the world prove strong enough to move the Security Council to take some speedy and effective action, was yet to be seen.

Brief reports of the situation in Paris had now started arriving. The meeting of the Security Council to consider the Hyderabad issue had been fixed for the 16th of September and little could happen before then. Moin Nawaz Jung and his associates were, in the interval, doing their utmost to acquaint individually the members of the Council of the situation in Hyderabad. With the exception of the delegate of Nationalist China, who was in favour of India and Russia which appeared non-committed, the attitude of all other delegates was solidly against the aggression committed by India. The Indian delegation, under Ramaswamy Mudliar had arrived in full force and been very active also behind the scenes. What precise action the Security Council would take could not be predicted but all indications were that most members of the body were fully aware of the situation and determined to put a stop to the aggression. The representatives of the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., France, Syria, Argentine and Canada had made no attempt to conceal their disapproval of the aggression committed by India while the rest of the members, excepting China, were less vocal though none approved India's action.

Before blowing up the bridge across the Musi river on the 15th of September the defending units at Suryapet had been pulled back to the

Western banks of the river and the flood gates of the Himayath Sagar Lake had been opened to flood the river bed with a view to make any fording operations difficult in the vicinity of the bridge for the advancing column from the east. The distance between the Lake and the site of the bridge was over a hundred miles. It was calculated that it would take almost three days for the water to travel that distance and attain sufficient depth to serve the purpose and the quantity of water required would almost empty the Lake. Thus the operation appeared futile. I asked the army Commander if it would serve any useful purpose to keep the gates opened. He was still emphatic that the bed should be flooded. He said he had ordered the entire defending units to fall right back to Nakrakal with a view to resist the advancing columns both from Suryapet as well as from South via Miryalguda and Nalgonda. The site of the damaged bridge itself had been completely abandoned and left totally undefended. Just as we were discussing the matter, a message was received that the Indian forces had been able to put across a temporary bridge over the blown up arches and had commenced crossing over. It was then that the army Commander admitted that he should have left a small force behind on the western bank of the river to prevent or in any case delay the bridging operations by the advancing forces but that was too late now. I ordered closing down the flood gates of the Himayath Sagar Lake and almost in despair asked the army Commander to try and build up the defences as best as possible in the favourably situated hill ranges, east of Nakrakal.

On the morning of the 16th September, the main armoured units of India passed through Bidar and by noon had started moving along the Bidar-Zahirabad road. By this time, part of the defending units and the twenty-five-pounder guns which had been stationed at Humnabad had also been pulled back behind Zahirabad and had been placed under the command of a brigadier who was stationed at Bidar. He had been ordered to well entrench the units in the hill ranges and fight to the last man. That at least the bulk of the men at Humnabad had been pulled back ahead of the Indian armoured units proceeding from Bidar was heartening. The terrain of the country, behind Zahirabad, was nearly as good as that at Humnabad and it was hoped that if the

troops were properly deployed they should be able to offer appreciable resistance.

I had called on the Nizam and had brief talks earlier in the morning and again before noon. He was far from his usual self and non-communicative. There had been no reference in any of the broadcasts from Delhi to my radio appeal to the leaders of India on the previous afternoon. The Nizam did not think that after the unexpected progress made by the Indian forces, the Government of India would pay any attention to my appeal. We had also agreed that there was little possibility now of Pakistan making any effective move in any manner either on strategic or political front. With all the principal armoured units of India engaged in Hyderabad, would it not be possible for the Pakistan troops to break through and at least take over the bridge head and the Pathankot-Jammu road, that would seal off the whole of Kashmir and might resolve the Kashmir tangle in favour of Pakistan? That might help Pakistan, the Nizam agreed, but that would be of no help to Hyderabad. In any case, we felt that so soon after the death of Jinnah, no one could plunge Pakistan into such a bold action. Only I still held hopes of some early action from the Security Council of the United Nations and a possibility of resisting the Indian advance till then which the Nizam did not appear to share.

There was a brief session of the Cabinet and the gravity of the situation and the prospects of the Security Council taking any effective action were considered. There was a mixed feeling of hope and despondency among the members of the Cabinet. The outcome of the meeting at Paris which was to be held that afternoon was eagerly awaited by everyone. The army Commander had been kept fully informed of the news arriving from Paris and he was made to realise as best as possible—the importance of his role in the grave situation.

The southern column of the Indian armies moving from the east had now been reported moving westward and it was still uncertain whether they would pass through Nalgonda and join the main column moving along the Suryapet-Nakrakal road or continue westward and try to break through along the Dewarkonda-Hyderabad road. There were no defences of any description in this sector, and so I decided to have sent as many Razakar irregulars as possible under some army

officers to fill the gap. Their transport, rations and supplies were all entrusted to civilian officers who indeed made a commendable job of it. No Indian armies, however, ever approached that sector.

The Hyderabad forces had a limited quantity of anti-tank mines and I gave orders to issue the entire stock and have them laid judiciously on the Zahirabad-Hyderabad Road and the Nakrakal-Hyderabad Road. The general staff laid out the exact points on the road maps and had the mines immediately despatched with orders to complete the job before the following morning. The mines were to be laid mostly in places where by-passing of the regular road by the tanks or heavy transport vehicles was difficult.

There was so much to do and so little time to do it all that the time seemed to be flying past. There was a call from the Nizam that he would like to see me any time that I could conveniently manage. I had already met him twice during the day—it was late in the afternoon when I visited him. I had found him unusually absent-minded in the two previous meetings that day, but in our third meeting I found him alert as usual and much calmer. I gave him a complete account of the latest situation. He had had a long talk with the army Commander earlier in the afternoon and had been kept fully posted of the situation over the phone from the Army Headquarters every half hour. He asked me how soon I expected to have some news of the proceedings of the Security Council at Paris. I reminded him that the time in Paris was about five hours behind ours and it would yet be another four hours before the Council would meet. We then reckoned that it would be in the early hours of the following morning when we would hear something from that end. He was silent for a while and so was I. He then started speaking to me in measured tones, although he appeared composed and calm. He told me that all my calculations had gone wrong. He said that Pakistan was still a silent spectator, the Hyderabad armies had put up a hopeless show, the Security Council was yet to meet and the Indian armies were racing towards the capital from all directions. He now felt that his own person and his family were in serious danger and he believed that the hour of decision had come for him. He said he had given serious thought to the matter and had then decided to have a frank talk with me. There were, he said, only two

courses left open now—one that I should resign along with the government headed by me and place the situation entirely in his hand and he would then seek whatever political settlement might be possible with India. If I did not agree with him, the alternative was that he would make a public declaration that he, the Nizam, was no longer connected with the affairs of the State and the responsibility of all the consequences thereafter would be exclusively that of the government headed by me. I asked him if he could indicate what kind of political settlement he expected to reach with India. He said all that he could indicate at the moment was that he would use his discretion and secure all that may be possible under the circumstances. He reflected for a few moments and then added that he would want my answer before nine o'clock the following morning and that my answer shall have to be definite and final.

From the attitude of the Nizam since that morning I had anticipated some serious development from his side—though not exactly the manner in which it came. After some thought, I told him that he could have my own reply by the hour he had fixed but I would not commit the government in any way. The best that I could do was to convey to him my personal reaction and then hold a Cabinet meeting at about ten o'clock and communicate the final decision of the government. He appeared a little disappointed but agreed with me in the end.

Arriving back from the Nizam's Palace, I pondered over the situation and what the Nizam had said. By the time I reached the Army Head Quarters I had made up my mind that my decision shall have to be based on hard realities. If there was the least chance, the struggle shall have to go on with or without the Nizam although the already delicate situation would be doubly difficult without the Nizam. What role would the remnants of the regular Army play in that event and in what manner would I have to deal with the army Commander? Could I take any one in confidence and seek counsel or should I act entirely on my own? These were some of the issues racing in my mind.

There were no major developments reported from any front at the Army Head Quarters. The army Commander had gone home for a change and I sat discussing the situation for a while with the senior staff officers. Taking into account the rate of advance and the inner

defence ring that had been thrown round, they all thought that it would take at least three days for the Indian armies to reach the capital. They were all eager to know if anything timely and effective could be expected of the Security Council.

The army Commander soon turned up. He said that there was little capacity left in the defending units on the eastern front and that he now feared more rapid advance of the Indian armies from the east than from the west. Qasim Razvi had informed me that there were about a thousand more Razakars who could go to any front as may be needed. I ordered sending out all the available Razakars and civilian volunteers to the eastern front with detailed instructions for laying out mines and digging up trenches across the roads to retard the progress of the advancing columns. I then checked up with the army Commander and his staff the distribution of the defending units in the hill ranges east of Zahirabad. The command of these units had been placed in the hands of the brigadier who was previously stationed at Bidar and the Army Commander appeared satisfied with his organising capacity and resourcefulness.

All the defending units had been living on tinned provisions ever since the invasion commenced. Hot and fresh food for these forces appeared one of the most urgent needs of the hour. Under civilian supervision fresh food was prepared and rushed early in the evening to as many units as possible.

I wanted a little time to myself to deliberate over what had passed between the Nizam and me earlier in the evening, but I had yet not had an opportunity. I left the Army Head Quarters for Shah Manzil, the official residence of the Prime Minister as I had been informed that some important messages from Mushtaq Ahmed had been decoded and awaited me. By the time I reached Shah Manzil there had been two or three calls from the Nizam. He wanted to see me urgently. I glanced through the messages from Mushtaq Ahmed and then proceeded to the Nizam's Palace. I wondered what more the Nizam would have to tell me now.

There was actually very little that the Nizam had to say and indeed there was not much that I had to convey to him. During the course of our conversation two messages had come from the Army Head

Quarters reporting no change in the situation on any front. As we were talking a couple of aeroplanes zoomed over us flying very low. We did not know whether they were Indian Air Force bombers or some of our own supply planes. A moment later we heard some of the Bren guns installed around the Nizam's Palace go into action but they were soon silent again. I was feeling very uncomfortable lest we shoot down any of our own planes.

I was impatient to get back early to the Army Head Quarters, but it was almost an hour before the Nizam permitted me to leave. I gained an impression that he was trying to assess my reactions over the talks we had earlier in the evening but I purposely avoided any reference to that subject. At the end I promised to communicate to him any reports on the proceedings of the Security Council at Paris the moment they reach me.

This was the first time that I felt an invisible curtain hung between the Nizam and myself and we were both talking with mental reservation. It made me feel unhappy, but I had no time to be emotional. On arrival at the Army Head Quarters, I checked upon the situation—there was no change reported on any front. The command room was no longer the sanctum of the Army heads. There were several civilian officers who were placed in charge of the supplies and various other services and they were participating in all the discussions and defence plans. Qasim Razvi was busy organising his Razakar batches and had called in several times to discuss and make arrangements for their transport and other requirements. He was kept informed of the military situation fully, but that did not seem to worry him much. He appeared active and confident as ever.

CHAPTER XXXIV

COLLAPSE OF RESISTANCE AND SURRENDER

It was sometime past midnight when the brigadier in command of the western defences appeared in the army Commander's Room. He reported that earlier in the night, under pale moonlight, the spear-head of the Indian armoured column had proceeded from Zahirabad along the road to Hyderabad. When the tanks came within point-blank range, the twenty-five pounder guns of the defending units had opened fire and blown up four of the advancing Sherman tanks. Thereafter, the column of tanks spread in a fan shape and made a hasty retreat towards Zahirabad. He did not expect any move by the tanks until next morning so he had decided to drive to Hyderabad, report the situation and obtain further instructions. He appeared nervous and was incoherent in his talk. After he had left the room, the Army Commander expressed the view that the brigadier looked a bundle of nerves and thought he was not in a fit condition to hold the command. We decided to call another Brigadier present at the Head Quarters and to send him out immediately to take charge of the front. Detailed instructions were issued to him and the situation explained at length. Before he departed, I made a personal appeal to him to hold the advancing units at any cost and that at the moment the fate of Hyderabad lay in his hands. He assured me that he will spare no effort and fight to the last man. We bade him God-speed and he immediately left.

The centre of gravity had now again shifted to the western front. There had been no fresh news of any advance from the eastern front. I was extremely uneasy in mind as to how a new commander would deal with the situation on the western Front. Around 2.00 A.M. I suggested to the army Commander that he had better make a dash to that Front and make sure of things for himself. He agreed with me and got ready to depart. A senior officer was posted to act in his place during his absence. The general staff was all engaged and rushing every available land mine both to the eastern and the western fronts and the personnel to lay the mines. To assist the army in the job, a number

of civilians had been drafted and despatched to the fronts along with the army personnel.

It was past 4.00 o'clock in the morning of the 17th of September when I was persuaded by the senior members of the general staff to go home and snatch a little rest. I had hardly stretched myself during the two previous nights and I eventually left the Army Head Quarters. On the way to my residence I stopped at the Shah Manzil and peeped into the restricted wing where the confidential staff was busy coding and decoding messages to and from Mushtaq Ahmed. There was no reference yet in any of the messages decoded to the proceedings of the Security Council at Paris. I left instructions to communicate to me the moment any news is received about the proceedings at Paris. I arrived home and was preparing to stretch myself when I was informed that the railway chief was on phone and wanted to speak to me on a very urgent matter. He informed me that he had just received a couple of messages over the railway telephones from the station master of Bibinagar that heavy shelling was heard in the vicinity of the station and that the Indian armies were proceeding towards the capital along the Bibinagar-Hyderabad Road. "What", I gasped, shelling near Bibinagar Railway station! How on earth could the Indian armies get to Bibinagar. That he did not know but he said he had checked upon the messages received and the Indian armies were in the vicinity and proceeding towards the capital. Indian troops near Bibinagar—hardly thirty miles from the capital and along a totally undefended road! This was the biggest shock that I had yet received. It only meant that either the defending units at Nakrakal had been completely wiped out or the Indian armies had by-passed them altogether and proceeded along Nakrakal-Jangaon road or Narketpalli-Bhongir road. They had previously by-passed the defending units at Dalam and suddenly appeared at Bidar. May be the same thing had happened once again. I telephoned to the Army Head Quarters. I was told that from the latest reports there was no fresh development on the eastern front and the defences on that front were in tact, although subjected to intense bombing by the Indian Air Force and continuous strafing by their machine guns. I conveyed to them the report that I had received from the railway chief—they also had received the same

news from the same source a minute ago and they were completely perplexed. Was there any way of stopping the advance along that route—no—none whatever. If the reports were correct, the Indian armoured column should reach Hyderabad in a matter of four or five hours and there were neither any forces to rush to that front nor any means to resist the advance along that road.

To me it now looked that the end had come. With Indian troops at Bibinagar and a straight undefended road leading to the capital there was nothing left to be done. I once again checked up with the railway chief and he said that the previous reports had been confirmed and correct. There was little time to lose. I must act and act quickly. I had a wash and prepared myself for the morning prayers. After the prayers I read a few verses from the Quran and was dressing up for the day when I was informed that the army Commander had arrived. I gave instructions to send him some coffee and joined him a few minutes later. He had straight driven to my residence from the western front. He appeared physically worn out and completely unnerved. He said he had inspected the defending units and had come to the conclusion that they were all so fatigued and worn out and so ill-organised that any further resistance was just not possible. He said that before the end of the day the Indian armoured column should be able to reach the capital from that side and he had now come to advise that whatever terms may be possible should be settled on a political level as any armed resistance was no longer possible.

I listened to him calmly and then enquired if he had any news from the Eastern front. He had none since he had left the Army Head Quarters. I told him the report that I had received from the railway chief. He was amazed and concluded that the Indian armies must have by-passed the defending units at Nakrakal. He reckoned that at this rate the advancing units would reach the capital in the forenoon and what would then follow was horrifying to guess.

I checked up with my personal office at Shah Manzil. Long radio messages had been received from Mushtaq Ahmad and were being decoded. Possibly they were the reports of the proceedings at Paris. A multi break up coding system had been adopted and coding and decoding was necessarily a long and tedious process.

The much awaited meeting of the Security Council was held at Paris on the afternoon of the 16th of September (1948) with the British delegate Sir Alexander Cadogan presiding. The primary issue before the meeting was whether the application of Hyderabad should be adopted on the agenda of the Council and considered. This was also a crucial issue for Hyderabad as on some purely technical grounds the application could be rejected. At the very outset Mr. Tsiang, delegate of the Nationalist China, a permanent member of the Council—advised postponement of the consideration until the 20th September as he had no instructions from his Government. Sir Alexander Cadogan, however, expressed the view that the situation demanded some urgent action and as such no time should be lost in at least commencing the discussions. Mr. Parodi (France) supported the President. Belgium recommended postponement for a day only. Mr. Malik (U.S.S.R.) wanted some more information and clarification from the President, as he represented the United Kingdom, particularly over the status of Hyderabad after the Indian Independence Act of August 1947. The President offered to supply as much information as he could on an appropriate occasion. Mr. Jesop (U.S.A.) supported the adoption of the application on the Agenda. Mr. Arce (Argentine) favoured the adaptation on the agenda in strong terms and emphasised that when in a certain part of the world one country had been reported to have invaded another country and people were being killed and wounded, the Security Council of the United Nations could not postpone consideration under the aims and objects of its Charter. After a good deal of discussion a vote on the proposal of China to postpone consideration was called resulting in only China supporting its proposal and all others abstaining. After some more discussions the President called for the vote to adopt the application of Hyderabad on the agenda or to reject. The vote was 8 in favour of adoption on the agenda and 3 abstentions. The application was then formally adopted on the agenda and the President invited Moin Nawaz Jung, the leader of the Hyderabad delegation, to present his case. Moin Nawaz Jung very forcefully presented the case of Hyderabad at length and appealed to the Security Council to intervene and intervene at once to put a stop to the bloodshed and save his country from annihilation and make it

possible to achieve lasting peace. It was now the turn of Ramaswamy Mudliar to speak on behalf of India. He had little ground to defend India's position as an aggressor and laid stress only on the competence of Hyderabad to place its case before the Security Council. He promised to furnish documentary evidence to prove that Hyderabad had never been an independent state and as such had no status to approach the Security Council.

The President wound up the meeting after listening to the two delegates, to give time to the members to study the situation carefully and fixed the next hearing for Monday, the 20th September (1948).

While the adoption by the Security Council of the application of Hyderabad on its agenda was a fundamental measure of success, the postponement of further consideration until the 20th of September presented a very gloomy aspect. The delegation from Hyderabad was fully conscious of the gravity of the situation and knew that it may be too late if the matter was deferred until the 20th. They contacted almost every member of the Council and pleaded for immediate action. The response was very heartening. Sir Alexander Cadogan thought that it would be physically not possible to convene a special meeting before Saturday the 18th and that he agreed to do. The possibility of a cease-fire resolution by the Security Council was discussed individually with most of the members and barring Nationalist China almost every other member was likely to support it—possibly Russia alone might have abstained. This was all very heartening only if Hyderabad could hold the situation on the battle front until then.

Thus, there was little of immediate value from the United Nations Security Council side. Here we were faced with the situation of the armoured units of India reported within thirty miles of the capital marching along a totally undefended road. If the Indian forces were to enter the capital under combat orders no one could say what amount of bloodshed of the civilian population that would lead to. The mass massacre of the civilian population, men, women and children all alike was known when the Indian forces had entered the towns of Osmanabad, Kalyani, Bidar and many other places with special show of vengeance against the Muslims. No less worrying was the possibility of large scale communal riots in the capital and if once that started no

one could say what the fate of the entire population of the city was going to be. I could waste no more time. May be the Nizam would sue for peace and save a mass massacre. I made up my mind to tender my resignation and advised my colleagues in the Cabinet to do the same.

I proceeded to Shah Manzil soon after the army Commander had left me. A number of messages from Mushtaq Ahmed had been decoded. In one of the messages, I was urged by the leaders of Pakistan to leave Hyderabad in time and avoid falling into the hands of the Indian Union. There were further details of the proceedings of the Security Council at Paris. I issued instructions to summon an emergent meeting of the Cabinet at 9.30 that morning. Qasim Razvi telephoned to enquire how I was. I told him how grave the situation had become and that there seemed little hope of surviving the day. I urged upon him to remain calm and do his best to prevent any disturbances or communal clashes. He reminded me that there had not been a single incident of communal disturbance any where ever since the invasion had started and that the disaster faced Hindus and Muslims of Hyderabad all alike. I agreed but emphasised that perfect calm and communal harmony was now needed more than ever.

It was a little after 8 o'clock in the morning when I called on the Nizam. He had already had a talk with the army Commander. I conveyed to him the latest reports that had been received about the proceedings of the Security Council at Paris. What good would any discussions do now if the Security Council had failed to pass a cease-fire resolution already, he asked me. After all of us were shot dead or were prisoners in the hands of the conquering forces, for whose benefit would the Security Council act if it were ever to act he wanted to know. In another few hours the might of the Indian armoured columns would be right over our heads and for how long was I going to wait and hope. Did I realise what amount of bloodshed it was going to lead to if the Indian armies were to enter the capital in fighting order. Did I not know the fate of the various towns after the Indian armies entered during the past few days? 'Yes', I told the Nizam. I realised all that and much more and yet to me death for the cause of freedom was more welcome. But, I said, I fully appreciated the Nizam's view point and did not propose to come in his way. I said

I had decided to tender my resignation that morning and to advise my colleagues in the Cabinet to do the same. So far as I could see they would follow suit.

I left the Nizam and on my way back stopped for a couple of minutes at the Army Head Quarters. The army Commander was still not there. Some of the staff officers met me and told me that they had no fresh development to report and that the despatch riders sent to locate the position of the Indian Forces on the Bibinager-Hyderabad road had still not returned.

All the members of the Cabinet and the senior secretaries to the Govt. had already assembled at Shah Manzil and were anxiously awaiting my return. We immediately commenced the proceedings. I outlined the latest military situation, what the army Commander had stated earlier that morning, the reports that I had received from the railway chief, all that the Nizam had said, and the intentions of the Nizam either to take the entire situation in his own hand or to dissociate himself completely and to make an announcement to that effect. I then appealed to the members of the Cabinet to seriously ponder over the situation and then each one to express his own views with perfect frankness and in clear cut terms. There was complete silence for some minutes. The Deputy Prime Minister, Pingle Venkat Rama Reddy, was the first to break the silence. He said in clear terms that he was ever ready to lay his life for the country and the sovereign. If the Ruler felt that he could save the situation in any manner, it was his bounden duty to lay down his office of responsibility immediately and then await any commands that the Ruler may have to give. He said that with the fullest sincerity of purpose, as he believed every member of the Cabinet, in fact every citizen of the State, had done his or her best to defend the cause of the country and that under my stewardship no one in the Government had faltered. But, even though we had failed in our single, handed struggle and had to surrender to the overwhelming might of arms, he did not regret the only honourable course that he and every patriotic citizen had followed. He said he was probably speaking for the last time and in a matter of few hours he would most likely be shot dead, but in no way that would be a dishonourable death. He then turned to me and said if I resigned he would resign simultaneously.

It was a brief but stunning speech. The next and the next and each member of the Cabinet more or less expressed the same view but in fewer words. A resolution was drafted stating that the Government had done their best to save the country but surrender to brute and overwhelming might of arms of India now appeared inevitable and under the circumstance the Government tendered its resignation to the Nizam. The resolution was unanimously passed and I had it immediately despatched to the Nizam.

When I came out of the Cabinet meeting I found a couple of staff officers awaiting me. They said the despatch riders had gone to Bibinagar and much farther and that there was no trace of any Indian forces along that road. Apparently the reports received through railway sources were wrong. They also reported that neither on the western nor on the eastern front there was any major advance excepting reconnaissance by stray units of Indian army but of course heavy bombardment and strafing of the defending units by waves of Indian Air Force bombers and fighters was going on round the clock. Tears rolled down their eyes when I told them that the Government had tendered its resignation and in all probability the Nizam would soon sue for peace. "Why, Sir" they enquired—"We could still fight and hold the Indian armies' advance for some time." "Shabash" (bravo!) I replied. We will no doubt all be dead soon but our spirit should not perish.

I had an urgent call from the Nizam to see him at once. Little I knew what he now wanted to see me about. When I reached there he was discussing with the police Chief and the army Commander the formation of a new Government. He had already sent word to Munshi that the Government headed by me had resigned and that he would soon be sending proposals for the setting up of a new Government for the consent and advice of Munhsi as the representative of the Government of India. I did not take part in any of the discussions. When they left, I told the Nizam that things are not likely to go all that smoothly and one thing I emphatically advised him was to destroy several confidential papers and records in his office. He pondered over my advice foı a moment and called his Personal Secretary and advised him to destroy all important documents and papers in his

office. I drove back to the Shah Manzil and called my confidential staff and gave orders for immediate destruction of the confidential section of my personal office and more particularly the various keys to the codes that were used for wireless transmission. I then drew up a message—the last message to Mushtaq Ahmed. I conveyed to him that on the eve of surrender to theoverwhelming might of India the Government in accordance with the wishes of the Nizam had resigned. I told him that this would be the last message from me—in all probability in a few hours we shall all no longer be in this world. He should try and keep the flag of Hyderabad flying and communicate to Moin Nawaz Jung to continue the battle in the forum of the United Nations and its Security Council. There was a grim look on every member of the staff and tears were rolling down from most eyes.

I had called on Munshi on my way back from the Nizam. He wanted some help to use the state wireless and to resume the telephone and telegraph lines with India. I was surprised to find that like the Nizam he was also engaged on equating the personnel in the formation of a new Government of which he would be the principal adviser. I reminded Munshi that despite all the propaganda against Hyderabad of Hindu Muslim discord, there had not been a single communal clash anywhere throughout the State. I hoped, and I appealed to him to make use of his good offices with the invading army commanders and prevent any mass slaughter as had been reported at other places conquered by the Indian army. He was apparently moved by my appeal and assured me that he would do all he could to prevent any bloodshed of civilian population by the invading armies.

In response to a telephone call from the Nizam I joined him in the Friday prayers at the beautiful little mosque in the Public Gardens. After the prayers, the Nizam asked me if I could see him for a few minutes in the afternoon—I agreed. I then drove to Shah Manzil to make sure that all the confidential records had been destroyed. The confidential staff assured me that my last message to Mushtaq Ahmed had been flashed and that all the confidential records had been burnt to ashes.

Earlier in the afternoon, I went to the radio station and broadcast a message to the people of Hyderabad. In a few words I said that

Hyderabad was no longer in a position to resist the might of the Indian armies and the Govt. having failed in its mission to defend the independence of the State had resigned. I appealed to every man, woman and child to bear the disaster with courage and fortitude and prepare themselves for a new order of life which might be very different to the one in which they and their forefathers were nourished. I made a special appeal to maintain the communal harmony which had been the distinctive feature of our collective life and let there not be a single incident which might stain our hands. I asked them to have faith in God and left them under His Merciful Protection.

Driving back from the radio station, I could see crowds of people around radio loud-speakers in shops and other public places. Almost everyone appeared with clinched hands and tears rolling down their eyes. Two large tears rolled down my own eyes when I saw the sight. On my return to Shah Manzil, I telephoned to Qasim Razvi and asked him to broadcast an appeal on the radio for calm and patience and communal harmony. At first he appeared reluctant but later agreed and went to the radio station and broadcast a most impressive and balanced appeal to all communities to maintain peace and order and fullest communal harmony.

One important but difficult matter for me was to destroy as much of the ammunition and arms that were left over. I frantically issued instructions for their destruction and amazingly enough, despite my having laid down the office, my instructions were largely carried out.

I was greatly moved by a small yet significant event. Rahim, a member of my Cabinet, rushed into my room and made a pathetic appeal to me to have Qasim Razvi flown out to Pakistan or any other foreign territory. He said in all probability we would all be shot dead shortly but he feared that the invading armies would cut Qasim Razvi into pieces alive and feed him to the vultures. I was moved by this demonstration of selflessness and sincerity. I telephoned to the Army Commander if he could arrange a plane with sufficient fuel to fly Qasim Razvi away. He said that was impossible. Even if he did attempt to fly him away, there were far too many Indian Air Force fighter planes hovering all over and any plane leaving was sure to be shot down.

I no longer wished to call on the Nizam but I was still being repeatedly sent for. During one of my brief visits, a discussion was going on as to who should present the sword of surrender to the Commander of the invading armies. The army Commander thought that he was the proper person to do so while some others present were of the opinion that the Prince of Berar, who also was the ceremonial commander-in-chief, would be the right person. The Nizam was discreet enough not to ask my views in the matter.

Earlier in the evening the Nizam, at the insistence of Munshi, agreed to go to the radio station and broadcast a message which Munshi had carefully drafted. Of special significance was the reference to the application of Hyderabad before the Security Council of the United Nations which, the Nizam was made to announce, he had ordered his delegates to withdraw. After that, Munshi himself broadcast a message also. Both the broadcasts purported to the effect that all wrongs had been committed by the previous Governments and particularly the last Government and some irresponsible and wily public leaders and a new government was now being set up to put everything in order under the aegis of the Government of India.

When I found an opportunity the following morning, I asked the Nizam if some important documents and confidential papers which I had already suggested to be destroyed had been destroyed. He assured me that they had. Later in the afternoon, the 18th September, Major General Choudhry, who was commanding the Indian armies on the western front, drove to the Bolarum Residency escorted by the Hyderabad Army Commander and other members of his staff in Jeep cars. The Nizam had sent his personal envoys consisting of Zulkader Jung, Abul Hasan Syed Ali, Ali Yavar Jung and one or two others to meet him on his behalf and convey his greetings and to seek his approval to the announcement of a new government which he had proposed to set up on the advice of Munshi. Later in the afternoon, I was again sent for by the Nizam, and as I sat talking to him the envoys returned with drooping eyes and grim faces. With a wave of hand they said that General Choudhry refuses to talk anything about the formation of any government or to listen to any suggestion from the Nizam. They said the General intended to proclaim Martial Law and military rule

under himself. "What! What! the Nizam exclaimed and then turned round me and screamed "But, Laik Ali, that is all against the understanding with Munshi". "What understanding" I queried, but got no answer. I soon felt that I was an unwanted person in the conversations that were to follow and begged leave to depart. The Nizam asked me to meet him the following morning, which I promised to do but that never came about.

After reaching home I learnt that the Indian forces planned to enter the capital on the forenoon of the 19th from the west and in the afternoon from the east. Later in the evening a despatch rider brought an envelope from the police chief to me. It was issued under the order of the Military Governer communicating that I was under house arrest and I was not to leave my house. I had already despatched my wife and children with my sister to some friends in some remote corner of the city for fear of molestation and to spare them from the sight of my own murder. So, after receiving the order, I relaxed myself on my own with no one about. My private tutor—an Arab by descent who had brought me up under his care from my early childhood, stood by me with tears flowing from his eyes all the time. Later in the evening the police chief rang me and apologised for being unable to call on me as he had promised to do earlier and also begged to be excused for having sent the arrest orders which he had to do. I told him I understood and he need not worry. I asked him what was the fate of Qasim Razvi. He said he was to be picked up the following morning.

A little later I had a phone call from Qasim Razvi. He sounded buoyant as usual. He asked me if he could join me at breakfast next morning as he had done a few times in the past. I did not know what to answer. I however said he was always welcome. Apparently he knew little of the fate awaiting him.

Being away from me at the crucial hour was apparently too much for my family to withstand and they decided to share my fate and suddenly reappeared the next morning. It was a wonder that they had managed to get back. My telephone lines had been cut off but I kept on receiving small bits of news. The invading armies both from the west and east had triumphantly marched through the city and were to take station at the Bolarum military station built by the British

and occupied by the British forces till the day they quitted India.

Late that night, a tall, well-built officer of the Indian army called at my house and wanted to see me. I went downstairs and met him. He appeared a colonel by rank. In a few clear but polite words he informed me that I will have to be taken away early the following morning. "Will the firing squad be ready" I asked him with a smile. To my amazement he had tears in his eyes. He turned round his face and begged to be excused from answering any questions. With a salute he left the room.

The news that I was to be taken away the following morning stunned for a while my wife, my sister and my children, but they were brave and recomposed soon. Probably none of them slept during the night. I divided the hours at my disposal into talking to my family, sleep and prayers and precisely followed the schedule.

Early next morning, a convoy of military vehicles surrounded my house but no one entered it. We waited and waited till it was day light and the sun had risen high. Apparently the unit was in wireless communication with its Head Quarters. Finally, the convoy of vehicles left in the same formation as they had come. We waited and waited but nothing further happened. Perhaps the session of the Security Council had something to do with it. Hours rolled into days, days into months and months into years. There was little if anything happened to me or come to my knowledge worth recording. And, then one day, a Providential E-S-C-A-P-E!

THE END

HYDERABAD CASE

BEFORE

THE UNITED NATIONS

SUPPLEMENT

BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Round One

There had been a good deal of activity in Paris on the morning of 17th of September (1948). The meeting of the Security Council after its session on the 16th had been provisionally fixed for the 20th of September, but in view of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Hyderabad, Sir Alexander Cadogan had agreed to summon an urgent meeting, if possible, on the 17th evening and had assured that it will in any event be convened on the 18th morning. The question of a cease-fire resolution had been discussed with most members of the Council and appeared to have had the support of Sir Alexander Cadogan, the President of the Council and delegate for U.K., Dr. Jessop, delegate for U.S.A., Mr. Parodi (France), Mr. Arce (Argentine), General Mac Naughton (Canada), Mr. Azam (Syria) and Mr. Umana Bernal (Columbia); while the representatives of U.S.S.R. and Belgium appeared in no way opposed to it. If voting went, it looked like some seven to eight members voting in favour of the cease-flre resolution and the rest abstaining.

Paris time is about five hours behind Indian time and the news of the surrender of Hyderabad on the afternoon of the 17th September reached Paris soon after midday there. That dampened all the enthusiasm of the members of the Council to convene an early meeting to discuss any cease-fire resolution. Thus, in the normal course, the meeting was held on the 20th September in a confused manner and then again on the 28th to hear the representatives of Hyderabad, and India. The cease-fire resolution or the merits of the case slipped into the back ground and attention was focussed on the issue whether the request of the Nizam for the withdrawal of the application of Hyderabad from the United Nations was genuine or made under duress.

In the meantime, while the Indian armies of occupation maintained order in some form or other in the capital city of Hyderabad, the rest

of the State, became one great expanse where murder, arson, loot and lawlessness held sway. After a general massacre by Indian armies in almost every place which they had visited in the beginning, attention was focussed later on the Muslim community in every nook and corner of the State. In some places, wells were filled to brim by rotting corpses .Some of the missions which came over from India to see things for themselves were horrified at what they saw and felt ashamed at recording their observations. The conflagration had spread so far and wide and with such ferocity that even the leaders of India had to publicly appeal to put a halt to the mass murder and arson and loot. The Security Council were apprised of the situation from time to time. The attitude of the Council is best outlined by the following excerpt from its own Official Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations:—

Document A/495; Official Records.

Fourth session supplement No. 2 PP 32-37

"By a letter dated 21st August 1948 (S/986), the Secretary-General of the Hyderabad Department of External Affairs communicated to the President of the Security Council his Government's request that the grave dispute which had arisen between Hyderabad and India be brought to the Council's attention, in accordance with Article 35, paragraph 2, of the Charter. He said that, unless settled in accordance with international law and justice, the dispute was likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. The letter stated that Hyderabad had been exposed in recent months to violent intimidation, to threats of invasion and to economic blockade which were intended to coerce it into a renunciation of its independence. The action of India threatened the existence of Hyderabad, the peace of India and the entire Asiatic continent, and the principles of the United Nations. For the purposes of the dispute, the Government of Hyderabad accepted the obligations of pacific settlement provided in the Charter."

In a cablegram dated 13th September (S/1000) to the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Hyderabad Department of External Affairs stated that Hyderabad was being invaded by Indian forces

and that hostilities had broken out in various parts of the country.

The communication dated 21st August (S/986) from the Government of Hyderabad was included in the provisional agenda for the 357th meeting (16th September) together with communications requesting urgent consideration and reporting that hostilities had broken out. That was the first meeting after the Security Council's transfer from New York to Paris, and several representatives requested adjournment to permit receipt of instructions and the arrival of the regular representatives.

Following discussion, the Council rejected the proposal of the representative of China for adjournment until 20th September. The result of the vote was 1 in favour, with 10 abstentions.

A number of representatives then made the express reservation that adoption of the agenda would not, in any way, prejudge the competence of the Security Council or any of the merits of the case. No objection was made to these reservations, although the representative of China considered that admission of a question to the agenda might be held to imply a certain view of the Council's competence and juridical status of the parties.

After discussion, the agenda was adopted by 8 votes, with 3 abstentions.

The representative of HYDERABAD submitted that the situation demanded immediate action by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter. His Government asked that the Council use its powers under the Charter to call a halt to the invasion and to bring about a withdrawal of the invading troops. Unless measures were taken immediately the world might be confronted with a *fait accompli* following the use of force. When those steps had been taken, he hoped that the Council would consider, investigate fully, and make recommendations upon the dispute between Hyderabad and India in relation to the situation as it existed when the dispute was first brought before the Council under Article 35, paragraph 2.

The representative of Hyderabad then described the blockade and the other facts of the situation and said that it had been clear, from the outset, that the Indian Government's policy was intended to create on the borders of Hyderabad and India a condition of confusion and dis-

order which would provide the aggressor with a plausible justification for what would be described as police action. Those plans had been made despite the fact that the Stand-still Agreement of 29 November 1947 between the two countries had expressly provided that nothing in it should give India the right to send in troops to assist in the maintenance of internal order.

Turning to the question of the independent status of Hyderabad he quoted an official statement made by the British Viceroy to the rulers and representatives of the Indian States on 25th July 1948, and reproduced in the White a Book on Indian States published by the Government of India, July 1948, to the effect that the Indian Independence Act released the States from all their obligations to the Crown, and that the States had complete freedom and were technically and legally independent.

The Government of Hyderabad had offered, and he affirmed that offer, to submit the question of accession in matters of defence, external affairs and communications for determination by a plebiscite on the basis of adult suffrage under the supervision of the United Nations, provided that negotiations were resumed free of dictation, and that the conditions of freedom from outside interference and coercion were restored.

He then replied to the legal objections to the Council's competence based or the alleged domestic jurisdiction of India in the matter, the international status of Hyderabad and the Stand-still Agreement. He maintained that, in fact, it had been India which had violated the Stand-still Agreement and had repeatedly refused to abide by the provision relating to the arbitration of disputes concerning the interpretation of the Agreement.

The representative of INDIA maintained that Hyderabad was not competent to bring any question before the Security Council; that it was not a State; that it was not, and never had been independent; the usefulness of the United Nations would be impaired and the cause of peace damaged if the provisions of the Charter were not respected and if parties which did not possess the characteristics of States were permitted to present their grievances before the Security Council. The account that had been given of his country's invasion of Hyderabad

had no bearing on the application made by Hyderabad on 21st August. Therefore, the case which the Security Council should first consider was whether, on 21st August, Hyderabad had been competent to come before the Council. In due course, he should submit a detailed analysis of the situation to demonstrate that legally and politically Hyderabad could never be an independent territory.

Without going into the merits of the case, the representative of India indicated the events which had exhausted his Government's patience and finally had obliged it to take action. He referred to the heavy armaments in the possession of the Hyderabad Government and the depredations of the private armies which had been encouraged or countenanced by the Hyderabad Government.

At the 359th meeting (20th September), the representative of HYDERABAD said that no new instructions emanating directly from the Nizam had reached his delegation. However, he suggested that the discussion should be postponed for a few days, in view of the surrender of the Hyderabad forces and reports that Nizam had given instructions to the Hyderabad delegation not to press the complaint before the Security Council.

The representative of INDIA read a telegram from the Nizam to the President of the Hyderabad delegation, which had been transmitted by the Indian Agent General in Hyderabad, ordering the withdrawal of the Hyderabad case from the Security Council. The Indian Government stated emphatically that the action had been taken by the Nizam himself without India's request and before the Indian army had reached Hyderabad.

Indian troops had taken action to put an end to atrocities and border incidents and to prevent repercussions in the provinces adjoining Hyderabad and the rest of India. The ease with which the Indian forces had entered was an indication of the overwhelming goodwill of the people of Hyderabad. In his opinion, the matter was concluded by the instructions which the Nizam had issued to the Hyderabad delegation.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that the use of force did not alter legal rights and the Government of India did not predicate any rights on the use of force. From that point

of view, the situation had not been materially changed since the previous (357th) meeting. He felt sure that the parties would desire to keep the Council informed and would supply detailed information.

He quoted a press report of a proclamation of the Indian Army Command to the people of Hyderabad stating that an opportunity would be given to them to decide their future internal government and relations with India. His Government had no doubt that the Government of India, in giving effect to that declaration, would have in mind that the Members of the Security Council and of the United Nations would watch development in Hyderabad with the hope and expectation that the outcome would demonstrate loyal support of the Principles of the Charter.

The representative of INDIA replied that his Government shared the deep regret for the use of force by any country on any occasion. He reiterated that force had been used in the present case only to maintain law and order, which had completely broken down in several parts of Hyderabad. He emphasised that his Government had repeatedly said that the will of the people would determine the relationship of Hyderabad with the Dominion of India and the form of Government which they wished for their own State. While maintaining the domestic character of the dispute, his delegation would be prepared to report in due course, to the Security Council. All details of the steps which his Government proposed to take to restore order and to ascertain and give effect to the will of the people of Hyderabad.

The representative of ARGENTINA expressed surprise at development in the Council. He considered that the representative of India had not demonstrated that the Council had no competence in the question and had not dealt with the merits of the case. He could believe the statements that the Nizam and his people were co-operating with the Indian army since a refusal to co-operate would have been difficult. He hoped that the question of Hyderabad would remain on the Council's agenda and that all members would be given an opportunity to discuss the substance of the matter.

The representative of COLUMBIA said that, if the State and Government of Hyderabad were to disappear, and if the Council found itself in a situation where the question could no longer be examined,

his delegation would have to make a reservation based on two of the fundamental principles of the United Nations:

The self-determination of peoples and the condemnation of any forcible acquisition of territory.

The representative of CANADA considered that the question of competence need not be further considered since the parties had undertaken to supply information to the Council.

The representative of SYRIA said that the Security Council must keep the Hyderabad question on its agenda. He suggested the possibility of setting up an *ad-hoc* committee to study the problem.

In a cable dated 22nd September (S/1011), the Nizam of Hyderabad informed the Secretary-General that, on 13th September, he had sent a message to the representative of Hyderabad ordering him to withdraw Hyderabad's case from the Security Council. He had also asked his Agent General in New Delhi to communicate the order to that representative. To resolve all doubts in the matter, he formally requested the Security Council to note that he had withdrawn the complaint made by his Government to the Council. He added that the Ministry at whose instance the complaint had been made had resigned on 17th September, at which time he himself had personally assumed the charge of his State. The delegation to the Security Council which had been sent at the instance of that ministry, had ceased to have any authority to represent either him or his State. On 30th September, the Secretary-General received from the Nizam a letter confirming the cable.

In a note dated 24th September (S/1015) to the President of the Security Council, the Hyderabad delegation stated that it viewed with satisfaction the attitude which the Council had adopted at the 359th meeting on 20th September. The Hyderabad delegation understood the Council's view to be that the invasion of Hyderabad by India, having been on act of force, could confer no legal rights on India; that the Council had taken note of the declaration of the Indian representative that the sole purpose of the intervention of India had been to restore order and to create conditions for a free expression of the will of the people of Hyderabad; and that the Council retained the question of Hyderabad on its agenda.

However, the events which had occurred since the Council's 359th meeting had shown that the Government of India and the Indian occupation authorities in Hyderabad were determined not to act in accordance with the declaration of the representative of India. Important constitutional and administrative changes had been introduced which were not related in any way to the avowed purpose of maintaining internal order. The Nizam had been compelled to surrender complete power to the Indian Military Commander. The principal administrative officers in most districts of Hyderabad had been removed. Instructions had been issued to the Hyderabad Agents General abroad to suspend their activities. In addition, there were reports, substantiated from Indian sources, that a regime of victimization and persecution had already begun.

The Hyderabad delegation stated that, in those circumstances it was imperative that a meeting of the Security Council be called to review the situation and prevent extension of the scope of the *fait accompli*. In view of the strict censorship and complete blackout of impartial news, it was suggested that the Council might find it desirable to appoint its own observers to keep itself informed of the trend of events in Hyderabad.

BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Round Two

The third meeting of the Security Council to consider the Hyderabad case was held at Palais de Challiot in Paris on the 28th September 1948 when there was some discussion of the Hyderabad delegation's credentials and rights to future participation in view of the communication (S/1011) which had been received from the Nizam and the note (S/1015) from the Hyderabad delegation.

The representative of CHINA considered that the Hyderabad delegation should not be invited to the Council's table.

The representative of COLUMBIA did not consider that the Council should reverse its decision with regard to the representatives of the two parties.

The representative of SYRIA argued that the Council should not base its actions on cablegrams which might not come from a truly authentic source. The Council, not being cognisant of conditions in Hyderabad, might request a representative or a member of the Council to obtain the necessary information on the spot.

The representative of ARGENTINA said that, since the Indian Government had proclaimed martial law in the State of Hyderabad and had assumed civil and military control, he could not give credence to communications signed by the Nizam, so long as the Nizam did not appear in person before the Council. He considered that the Council should request the Government of India to withdraw its troops from Hyderabad and to re-establish the normal Government, leaving any dispute to be settled by peaceful negotiations. The representative of Argentina said that he would not vote for the withdrawal of the item from the agenda.

The representative of COLUMBIA said that, since Hyderabad was under military occupation, the Council could not be certain that the Nizam had signed the letter of his own free will. He agreed with the

suggestion of the representative of Syria that the Council should rely on its own sources of information.

After further discussion, the Council accepted the suggestion of the President that it should hear the representative of Hyderabad on the question of credentials.

The representative of HYDERABAD said that a successful invader had withdrawn the credentials issued to his delegation by the lawful Government. He asked whether such a procedure was consistent with the authority and purpose of the United Nations. His delegation would leave to the Security Council the important decision concerning its status before the United Nations.

He declared that Hyderabad had been invaded not for the purpose of maintaining order, but as part of the plan of creating a unified India. There had been no disorders, communal strife or excesses in Hyderabad, even after the invasion had begun. Furthermore there was a profound difference between restoring order and the complete substitution of Indian authority for that of Hyderabad. He described the far-reaching administrative and constitutional changes which were being made and which amounted to annexation.

The representative of HYDERABAD said that the proposed plebiscite must not be a mockery under the pressure of Indian military power and imported administrators.

Regular constitutional Government must be restored, pending the establishment of international machinery for a plebiscite. Impartial observers must be appointed to report on the conditions and administration of the country, since it was clearly impossible for the Council to limit itself to information supplied by the Indian authorities alone. There was no reason why both parties should not, at that time, put forward constructive proposals for dealing with the entire situation, unhampered by the previous history of the negotiations. In that endeavour, they might well be aided by a member or by a committee of the Security Council.

The representative of INDIA said that the question of the genuineness of the credentials of the Hyderabad delegation might well have been examined at a much earlier stage. He quoted statements made by the Nizam and by Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General of

India, to show that the Government of Hyderabad had been taken over through a *coup d'etat* by the extremist which had referred the matter to the Security Council. At that time, the Nizam had ceased to be a free agent and had come under the control of a group of extremists from whom he had recently been released.

Replying to allegations regarding censorship in Hyderabad, he said that all the normal functions of Government were being carried on by officers of the Hyderabad Government, although certain officers whose political contacts with the extremists had been proved had been dismissed. He pointed out that, as early as August 1947, the Indian Government had suggested a plebiscite on the issue of Hyderabad's accession, but the Hyderabad Government had rejected that proposal. The solution of the Hyderabad problem had established a new bond of friendship between Hindus and Muslims throughout India and Hyderabad. The Security Council should now consider whether the cause of peace would not be better served by dropping the matter from the agenda.

In a letter dated 11th October (S/1031) the Head of the Hyderabad delegation stated that, since the views of the delegation. on the validity of their credentials and cognate matters had already been placed before the Security Council (360th meeting), he did not propose to ask that the delegation be represented at the next meeting of the council on the question.

In a letter dated 6th October 1948 (S/1027), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan requested that Pakistan be permitted to participate in the discussion of the Hyderabad question in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter.

In another letter dated 20th November (S/1084), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan stated that reports received since the date of his previous letter indicated that the situation in Hyderabad had continued to deteriorate and that urgent action by the Security Council was needed to remedy the situation. He therefore requested that the Council may deal with the Hyderabad question at an early date.

The question was placed on the provisional agenda for the 382nd meeting (25th November). Subsequently, the leader of the Indian delegation informed the President of the Council that the delegation

which India had appointed to deal with the Hyderabad question had been withdrawn (S/1089). The Council postponed discussion of the question to its next meeting.

At the 383rd meeting (2nd December), the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Security Council Affairs informed the Council, in reply to a query from the representative of Syria, that the delegation of India still had no duly qualified representative in Paris to participate in the discussion of the Hyderabad question.

By a letter dated 6th December (S/1109), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan requested that a meeting of the Security Council be called as soon as possible.

By a letter dated 10th December (S/1115), the Government of India informed the Security Council that conditions in Hyderabad were peaceful and normal and that there was complete freedom of access by air, rail and road. In the circumstances, the Indian Government did not propose to send a representative to the Security Council to discuss the Hyderabad question.

In a letter dated 12th December (S/1118), the Head of the Hyderabad delegation said that it was now clear that the Nizam's alleged instructions for the withdrawal of the complaint had been given under duress and that he was virtually a prisoner of the Indian military authorities. Information in the possession of the Hyderabad delegation indicated that the Nizam approved of the continued efforts to enlist the support of the United Nations. Accordingly, his delegation was reasserting its authority as originally appointed. Were that authority to be challenged, the Security Council would have to ascertain to what extent the Nizam had been a free agent. The situation also raised a question of law which could be properly answered by the International Court of Justice. That question was to what extent the Security Council could consider as valid an order for the withdrawal of a complaint made by the Head of a State occupied by an aggressor.

In a letter dated 13th December (S/1124), the representative of India transmitted to the President of the Security Council a brief factual report on the situation in Hyderabad. The report, made without prejudice to the question of the Council's competence, described the

general conditions prevailing in Hyderabad, and, *inter alia*, developments in the administration, the State's financial and economic position, preparation for a Constituent Assembly and the status of the Nizam. The report quoted a statement by the Nizam that his subjects were settling down to normal life and that all shades of opinion in the State felt that the present administration was impartial and efficient.

At the 384th meeting on 15th December 1948, the representative of Pakistan was invited to participate in the discussion of the Hyderabad question. Further consideration was, however, postponed until after the Council's return to Lake Success.

BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Round There

The Government of Pakistan had hoped that in accordance with the decision taken at the meeting (384th) of the Security Council in Paris on the 15th December, 1948, the Secretariat would arrange for discussion of the Hyderabad question immediately after the Council returned to Lake Success early next year; but no such action was taken, and it was not until the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, after having waited for over four months, requested for an early meeting of the Security Council through his letter dated the 4th May 1949, that a meeting was convened at New York to hear the representative of Pakistan on the Hyderabad situation.

At the 425th meeting (19th May), held at New York the representative of India re-counted the circumstances in which India had been forced to take action to put an end to the prolonged lawlessness and disorder which had been disturbing not only Hyderabad but also the adjoining districts of India. In particular he cited the case of Sidney Cotton, who had been convicted in a London court on charges of gun-running in Hyderabad, with the help of Pakistan officials. The military action had lasted only three or four days, because of the favourable attitude of the people. The Ministry at whose instance the complaint had been filed had resigned and the Nizam had formally withdrawn the case from the Security Council. He quoted statements of the Nizam denying allegations that he had acted under duress. With regard to the ministers who had been kept in power by a military organization known as the Razakars he quoted Lord Mountbatten's statement that they had taken office by engineering a coup. He also quoted various excerpts from a letter from Lord Mountbatten to the Nizam to the effect that those ministers had used coercive methods to prevent the carrying out of the Nizam's wishes thereby jeopardizing relations between India and Hyderabad. The ministers had also taken

considerable liberties with State funds.

The action which India had been forced to take had not been directed against the people of Hyderabad or their ruler, but against the fascist clique which had usurped power and had been misusing it in a manner that had threatened the tranquillity of India as well as Hyderabad. As soon as those men had resigned and the Nizam had assumed charge, he had withdrawn the complaint which they had made to the United Nations. The future of the State and its relationship with India were matters which had been left to be decided by the people. Arrangements for convening a Constituent Assembly for that purpose would be completed by the autumn.

The representative of INDIA made a detailed reply to the legal arguments which had been advanced in support of the view that Hyderabad was a State in international law and therefore capable of being a party to an international dispute and able to invoke Article 35, paragraph 2. In particular, he criticised the analogy that had been drawn between the international status of Hyderabad and that of the Republic of Indonesia. The Republic had been recognized *de facto* by a number of States, but no Government had ever recognized Hyderabad. Furthermore, Indonesia was not in the heart of the Netherlands as Hyderabad was in the heart of India. With the lesson of developments in Burma, India could not possibly agree to be dismembered by allowing any of the Indian States to claim international statehood. Hyderabad had never been a State in the sense of international law and it could never be one in the future if India was to live.

He said that conditions were settling down to normal and that the Nizam and his officers had been co-operating with the Indian authorities for the restoration of law and order. Relations between the religious communities were cordial. There was no restriction on entry to Hyderabad, and press representatives from India and abroad had visited the State without hindrance. Any genuine grievances of the Muslims in any part of India could be voiced in the Indian Constituent Assembly, where they had adequate representation. The Indian Cabinet contained seven Hindus, two Muslims, two Christians, two members of the Scheduled Castes and one Sikh.

In recent months, there had sprung up the salutary practice of

conferences between India and Pakistan on such problems as rehabilitation of refugees and treatment of minorities. Quite apart from the question of competence, if the Council desired information on any specific points, India would be able to supply it. Clearly, recurrent debates in the Council served no useful purpose and merely gave the opportunity for statements which disturbed India's internal tranquillity. In all these circumstances, he submitted that it was neither necessary nor desirable that the question be retained on the Council's agenda.

In reply, the representative of PAKISTAN maintained that India's action had been entirely unjustified and had constituted a breach of international peace, a threat to the maintenance of peace and a continuation of aggression which called for redress.

He described at length the historical position of Hyderabad, its relations with the United Kingdom, and the international status of the various Indian States after 15th August 1947, with a view to proving, that, at the termination of British rule, all those States had become independent unless they had signified a desire to accede either to India or to Pakistan. India had recognized that principle with regard to Jammu and Kashmir. It followed therefore that Hyderabad was independent. However, India was maintaining the view that the people of Hyderabad would be free to choose whether or not to accede to India, but that in either case, Hyderabad would have to hand over to India the conduct of its foreign affairs. India had long contended that the dispute, if any, between Hyderabad and India was a domestic matter, but if Hyderabad had been independent before 12th September 1948, then the mere fact that its independence had been destroyed did not make the dispute a domestic matter for India.

With regard to the similarity between Indonesia and Hyderabad, he pointed out that, whereas the Netherlands could, perhaps with some plausibility, claim that Indonesia was still a Dutch colony, Hyderabad had a ruler and all the machinery of a State. After 15th August 1947, that State had been independent and its independence had been destroyed by military action on the part of India.

The representative of India had drawn the Council's attention to the fact that there were over thirty million Muslims in India and that no Government could afford to ill-treat so large a minority. However,

earlier occurrences and incidents had created grave doubts in the minds of both Pakistani and Indian Muslims regarding the ability of the Government of India to safeguard that minority. In any event, the main question, was not the treatment of an Indian minority, but the problem of Hyderabad, which constituted a disturbing factor in the relations between India and Pakistan and subjected the Government of Pakistan to pressure from its own people for active intervention. The Government of Pakistan had had to exercise a great deal of restraint in order to prevent action which might have destroyed the possibility of the continuation of peaceful relations between the two States. That was the principal reason why, on behalf of Pakistan, he had requested the Security Council, in Paris, to grant him a hearing on that problem.

Reviewing the development of the dispute, the representative of Pakistan said that the Nizam, on 11th June 1947 had issued a declaration to the effect that he had decided not to participate in the Constituent Assembly of either Pakistan or India. On 9th July 1947, in a letter to the Crown Representative, the Nizam had requested that his State be accorded dominion status. At that time the Government of India had insisted on accession, whereas the Nizam, short of accession, had been willing to sign a treaty with India on the subjects of communications, defence and international affairs. Later on, it had been found necessary, pending a settlement, to agree upon a *modus vivendi*; that had been the Stand-still Agreement of 29th November 1947. That Agreement was to have remained in force for a period of one year, and disputes arising out of it were to have been referred to the arbitration of two arbitrators, one appointed by each of the parties, and an umpire appointed by those arbitrators. He then described the development of negotiations on the supply of arms and equipment. After examining the nature of the Indian blockade, he replied to the charges of gun-running.

Later, the Governor-General had suggested that, in order to satisfy public opinion in India, the Nizam should take steps to introduce a responsible government. The Nizam had not been unresponsive.

As to the alleged breaches of the Stand-still Agreement, Hyderabad had suggested arbitration, as provided by the Agreement. India had

replied, however, that consideration of the large number of points on which differences had emerged made it clear that arbitration would take up all that remained of the period of one year for which the Agreement was to last. The Indian answer had concluded that reference to arbitration could be regarded as a practical solution only if the Hyderabad Government would agree to take, immediately, certain steps which could be regarded as a genuine token of a desire to maintain cordial and friendly relations with the Government of India. The suggestions had been rejected. Since they would have meant that India would practically have run the Government of Hyderabad.

Continuing his statement at the 246th meeting (24th May) the representative of PAKISTAN recalled that, on 10th June 1948, the Director of the Information Bureau of the Nizam's Government had issued a press note to the effect that, in order to avoid the possibility of a clash with Indian forces, orders had been given that all Hyderabad troops should be withdrawn to a line three miles within the border. On 19th June, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad had made a complete review of relations with India. He had explained that, after protracted negotiations, the Government of India had made three alternative proposals; first, accession; second immediate responsible government on the lines determined by the Government of India; and third, decision of the issue of accession to India or independence by a plebiscite under neutral observation. With regard to the last alternative, the Nizam had agreed to a plebiscite under the general supervision of an independent international body. The Government of India had proposed, however, that during the interim period and pending the verdict of the people Hyderabad should accede in substance and should institute responsible government on the lines determined by India. At that stage, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad concluded, there had been no alternative but to reject the Indian proposals. Thereupon, the representative of Pakistan continued, negotiations had come to a standstill because there had been no further avenue to explore. The negotiations had showed that the Nizam had been willing to settle all matters in dispute by treaty, while the Indian Government had insisted on accession, which would have given the Indian Union the direct right to legislate for Hyderabad.

Then the military invasion had taken place, and after four or five days of bloody struggle the resistance had been overcome by the heavily armed forces of India, supported by intense aerial bombing on more than twenty fronts. The Nizam had transferred full authority of Government to the military commander, and that military government had continued ever since.

During the military occupation, outstanding individual Muslims had been persecuted on the ground that almost every one of them was a member of the Razakars organization, which had resisted the demand for accession to India. With regard to the alleged *coup d'etat* of 27th October, 1947, he pointed out that, following some demonstrations in Hyderabad, the Prime Minister alone had resigned. Then the Government had been reconstituted with the majority of the ministers remaining. Later Mir Laik Ali had been called upon to take over the Prime Ministership and the Government had been enlarged. For the first time in the history of Hyderabad, seven out a total of twelve ministers had been elected representatives of the people. He cited instances to disprove the Indian representative's contention that Hyderabad was free from censorship and travel restrictions.

The representative of Pakistan suggested that if any doubt remained with regard to the Council's competence, an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice should be obtained under Article 96.

Meanwhile, provisional action should be taken under Article 40, to include arrangements for a general amnesty for the Razakars and other organisations. The ministers and other political leaders should be set free. Every type of persecution and discrimination should be stopped. If the Court was of the opinion that the Council was competent and the facts disclosed an unjustified aggression, the Council would have the duty of taking appropriate steps to restore the *status quo* as far as possible. If the Council was in any doubt on the matter, it had the means of ascertaining the facts for itself.

Since the Government of India had frequently expressed its willingness to refer the matter to the people, he submitted that a plebiscite should be held under the guidance, supervision and control of the Security Council to settle the question of accession or independence.

He stressed his country's need and desire to live in friendly co-operation with India and appealed to the Council to take action as soon as possible to rectify a situation which caused unfriendliness between Muslims and Hindus and made it more difficult for the Governments of India and Pakistan to continue friendly relations.

When the representative of Pakistan had finished, a conspiracy of silence prevailed, and the meeting ended on an inconclusive note. Not a voice was raised to condemn the Indian aggression, or even to demand an inquiry into the real facts with a view to arriving at an equitable solution of the problem. The Council shirked its duty to come to grips with the question of Indian aggression even though India had openly challenged not merely the prestige but the authority of the United Nations. The Security Council thus failed to provide protection to a small state against the onslaught of its overwhelmingly bigger and stronger neighbour, and thereby encouraged India to plan and commit further aggressions. The solemn undertakings repeatedly given by India before the world body to determine the future status of Hyderabad in accordance with the will of the people have all gone over-board. Progressively, the State has been dismembered and the whole of it, in parts, has been annexed to the various provinces of India. The Nizam lives a virtual prisoner, stripped of all his authority and most of his belongings, counting the remaining days of his life but, the Security Council of the United Nations continues to remain seized of the Hyderabad question!!!

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